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Barry Sullivan:

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By W. J. LAWRENCE.

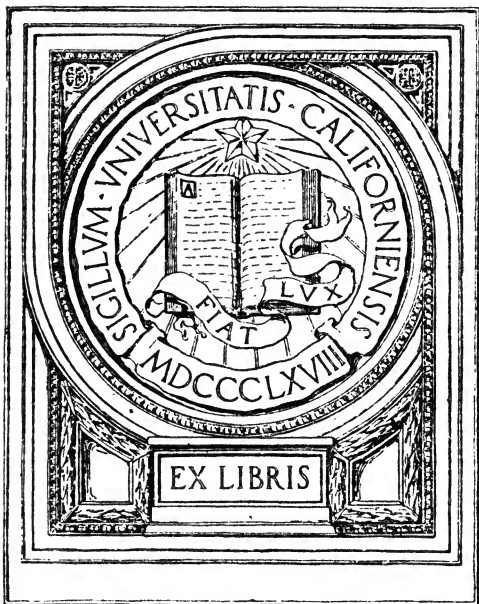


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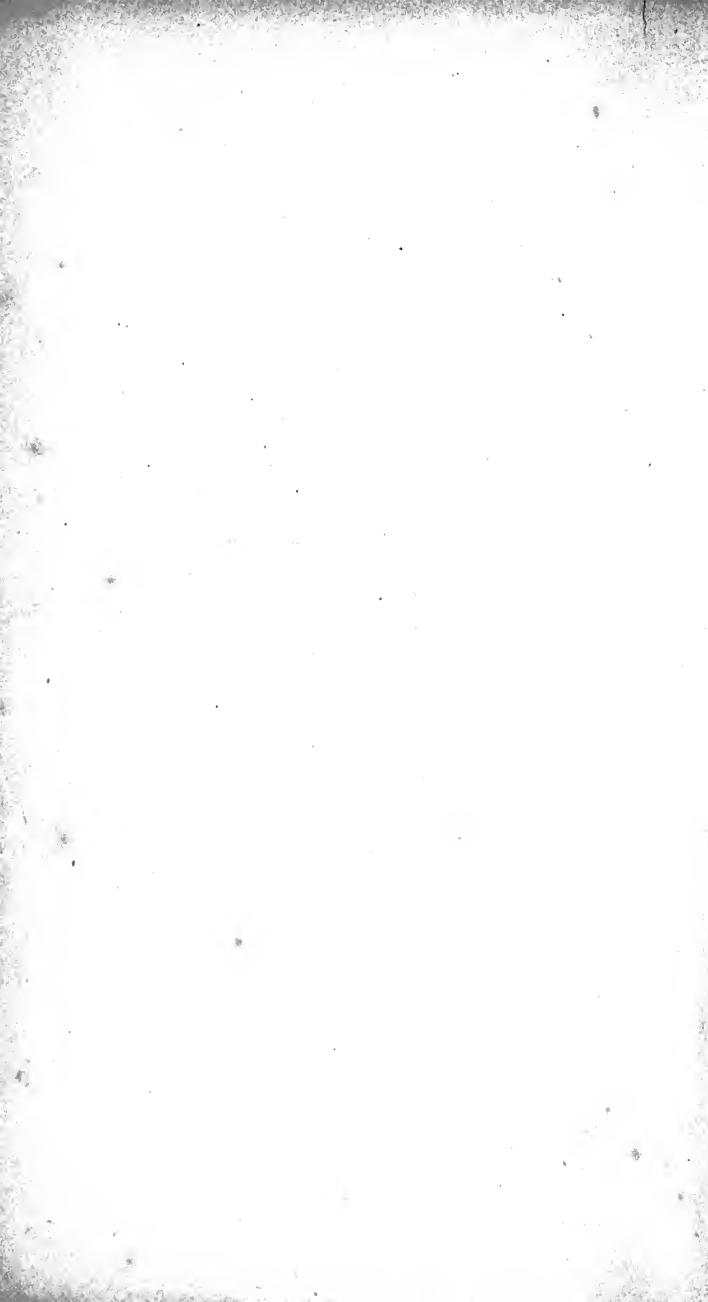
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BARRY SULLIVAN:

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY

W. J. LAWRENCE,

II

AUTHOR OF

'The Life of Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, Tragedian.'

“Farewell! Nor mist, nor flying cloud,
Nor night can ever dim
The wreath of honours, pure and proud,
Our hearts have twined for him!
But bells of memory still shall chime,
And violets star the sod,
Till one last broken wave of time
Dies on the shores of God.”

—William Winter.

LONDON:

W. & G. BAIRD, 62 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

1893.

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PHELAN

PHELAN

TO MY OLD FRIEND,
WILLIAM R. M'CLELLAND,
IN MEMORY OF HALCYON DAYS
WHEN DRAMATIC TASTES WERE MUTUALLY
FOSTERED.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS Sketch has been almost entirely compiled from a very considerable mass of Sullivaniana accumulated by the author during many years—the flotsam and jetsam of theatrical matter acquired and utilised in pursuit of bygone literary ventures. It is, indeed, in the words of old Burton, “a thing of meere industry, a collection without wit or invention, a very toy.”

Where inspiration has been derived from a thousand and one sources, it would be futile to attempt to make reparation to the multitude of writers whose thunder has been appropriated. But the reader may be afforded a few of the chief well-springs of information without risk of tediousness. Among theatrical works, Pascoe’s “Dramatic List,” Dibdin’s “Annals of the Edinburgh Stage,” Colonel Brown’s “History of the Theatre in America,” and the sensational little book called “The Truth about the Stage,” have all proved helpful in their way. Mr. John Coleman’s absorbing *In Memoriam* sketch, in the “Theatre” Magazine, June, 1891, has been laid freely under contribution as presenting personal reminiscences of the first importance. Indebtedness must also be acknowledged to the *Memoir of Barry Sullivan*, written by Mr. J. W. Flynn, and published

in the Cork Examiner of May 9 and 16, 1891 ; and to an article entitled "Barry Sullivan's Career," the result of an interview, which appeared in the Birmingham Daily Mail of October 13, 1886. Finally, the author desires to return his best thanks to Mr. W. H. Campbell of San Francisco, and to Mr. James Smith of Melbourne, for the trouble undergone in sending him their impressions of the tragedian's Australian career.

It is to be hoped that the issuing of this monograph at once in a popular form will meet with due appreciation at the hands of that pit-and-gallery section of the public whose suffrages it was ever Barry Sullivan's especial delight to win.



BARRY SULLIVAN.

CHAPTER I. (1824-1852).

EARLY STOCK DAYS.

TO few men professing the Roman Catholic faith has it been given, as to poor Barry Sullivan, to linger on in this world for close on three years after the administration of the last rites of the Church. With the fatal word *Thanatos* written so long and so plainly on the great tragedian's brow, the intelligence of his release from suffering brought with it satisfaction of a melancholy nature rather than unpleasant shock. None the less widespread, however, was the regret at the loss of one who for fully three decades boasted a well-nigh undisputed sovereignty over the legitimate drama in the provinces, and led his willing captives in silken chains. In the sorrow expressed over his departure there was, moreover, a deeper and graver significance than the merely personal. The people were no longer able to raise the old cry of "The King is dead; long live the King"—for, sooth to say, the dynasty had gone its way for ever with the potentate. No more for us the stately presence, the virile breadth and lusty vigour of Vandenhoff, Phelps, and G. V. Brooke. Alas! these are as the snows of yester-year. With Barry Sullivan gone we can no more recall the majestic deportment and sonorous declamation of the grand old traditional school than

we can revivify the dodo. Doubtless to many of the younger generation, in these days of Ibsenism and stage archæology, the loss will not appear momentous. "Tradition," said the dead tragedian once to a Birmingham interviewer, "Tradition is the peculiar instruction which Shakespeare himself gave to the actors of his day, and which has been handed down from one to another from that time. It is to acting what Euclid is to the mechanical arts; a book, so to speak, containing the great principles of the art—the great ideas of the greatest men in the profession." Most indubitably they who are *laudatores temporis acti* will agree with all this, and mourn that the heirloom should lack claimants.

Concerning Barry Sullivan's early antecedents little or no definite information was procurable, strange to say, prior to his decease. Albeit he subjugated his old-world spirit so far, some six years ago, as to permit himself to be "interviewed" by one or two enterprising English journalists, still he was never in sympathy with such purely modern methods of theatrical puffery as the hawking of an actor's private affairs in the newspapers, and resolutely refused at all times to be "drawn" in regard to the experiences of his boyhood. Indeed, the frankest avowal ever made by him in this direction was the slight morsel of early autobiography vouchsafed his admirers in a capital speech delivered at the National Banquet given in his honour in Dublin, in December, 1878. "It may not be considered out of place," he said, "if I mention here the fact that I commenced the art which I have the honour to profess, not on the first rung

of the ladder, but on the very ground. While yet a boy I stood alone in the world, without father, mother, or friend—without means, and master only of a little Latin and less Greek.” To this dignified, if perplexing, reticence on the part of the tragedian must we attribute the mystery which shrouded until recently the circumstances of his origin, and rendered him second only to Homer in respect to the number of cities which laid claim to the honour of his birthplace. That his parents were Irish, and that he himself (to use his own expression) was “Irish to the heart’s core,” no one for a moment ever doubted. Not content with this, however, there have been perfervid Celts whose patriotic zeal so far warped their reasoning powers as to induce them on the slenderest of evidence to maintain that the tragedian first saw the light in the County of Cork, some pinning their faith to Clonakilty and others standing up for Dunmanway. Surely after all it was more in keeping with the fitness of things that Thomas Barry Sullivan (or Barry Sullivan, as he is best remembered now) should have first seen the light in the capital of Shakespeare’s shire, and on the anniversary of the bard’s birthday? Beyond the fact, however, that he was born at Birmingham on Friday, April 23, 1824, of parents in humble circumstances, little of any trustworthiness is known concerning his early boyhood. To Cork, the home of the O’Sullivans from time immemorial, he is commonly reported to have migrated with his father and mother while as yet a child. There, at any rate, we find him in 1838, a poor, ill-educated lad on the threshold of life as a draper’s assistant in a new em-

porium opened by one Swinburne in Winthrop Street. But what it once pleased the penny-a-liner to call "the devouring element" soon made away with Swinburne's establishment, and the embryonic tragedian had perforce to take a situation in Todd's (now Cash & Co.'s) pretentious drapery house. Moth-like, however, the juvenile counter-jumper had already singed his wings at the histrionic flame. There was something decidedly attractive about this orphaned and friendless lad of fifteen, with his handsome Irish face already showing in its lineaments the dawnings of character and resolution, his spare, elegant figure, and his profusion of jet-black ringlets. At least so thought the local player folk into whose good graces he speedily ingratiated himself. Finding that he had a tenor of light but eminently pleasing quality, they pressed him into service to appear one night at the old theatre in George's Street, for the benefit of one of the Misses Smith, the charming duettists, recognised as nieces of Kitty the fascinating Countess of Essex. Making his bow, *en amateur*, as young Meadows in the once popular comic opera of *Love in a Village*, Sullivan's success proved so unequivocal that manager Seymour of whimsical notoriety (once epithetised by an enraged actress as "You, Frank Seymour, the very boards of whose stage are enseamed with the sweat of unpaid artists!") engaged him forthwith to play "leading, singing, walking gentleman." Not long afterwards, however, Seymour had a dispute with Mr. John M'Donnell, the lessee of the George's Street house, and seceding from the management he, with the financial aid of a friendly solicitor, transformed

the old diorama hall in Cook Street into a temple of the drama, and proceeded to "run" it in opposition to the established theatre. Among the stars of varying magnitude whom Frank *Schemer* (as he was significantly nicknamed) induced by specious promises to journey from Dublin was one Paumier, a tragedian of some distinction, who turned the tables on the gay deceiver by constituting himself manager of M'Donnell's theatre. Exercising considerable forethought, Sullivan very wisely elected, in the spring of 1840, to join the forces of the new-comer. Under Paumier he gained many valuable lessons in fencing and dramatic elocution which afterwards stood him in good stead. But his stay there was of brief duration, as the George's Street Theatre was burnt to the ground immediately after the successful engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Wood, the operatic stars, causing his mentor to leave at once for England. Making the best of a bad job, Barry returned to the fold of the slippery Seymour, and by way of apology for his former desertion placed himself at the beck and call of the manager, played a great variety of characters with unremitting carefulness, and thus laid up a store of unpopularity with the other members of the Cook Street company. Things were in a bad way in the little Victoria Theatre notwithstanding the disappearance of the other house. "The ghost seldom walked." (Few who are not actors will comprehend the sad significance of this peculiar phrase.) And poor Seymour attributed it all to that confounded fellow Collins, who had brought his travelling booth to the city, and by dint of a good company, attractive melodramas, and

reduced prices was doing a roaring business with the rough-and-ready playgoers of the neighbourhood. What with financial straits on the one hand and internecine squabbles on the other, Sullivan determined once more to go over to the enemy. Exercising his powers of persuasion, he induced Collins to permit him to appear in the booth in a round of leading legitimate characters. The venture proved happy for all concerned; money kept pouring in; and Collins grew so elated that he set about erecting a more commodious wooden structure on the site at present occupied by the Cork Opera House. Strange to say, however, his luck departed with the abandonment of the old booth. Before long Barry found it expedient to eat the leek and return to his former humble position in Seymour's Cook Street company. A quaint old building this Royal Victoria Theatre! Owing to its very primitive construction the ladies had to dress themselves in the "flies," which were reached by a step-ladder; while the actors had to content themselves with the dread regions beneath the stage, and at spring tides (when the water had a provoking habit of coming up the sewers) not infrequently found portions of their attire floating about, seemingly on a voyage of expedition.

During the winter of 1840, Barry Sullivan had the felicity of supporting the divine Ellen Tree (afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean), then very popular in Cork. On one occasion the bill presented a rather curious combination of pieces, the evening's entertainment commencing with a performance of Sheridan Knowles' *Love*, followed by the drama of *Matrimony*, and concluding

with *Three Weeks after Marriage*. That burly comedian and capital singer Paul Bedford (afterwards to be recognised as the Adelphi favourite of "I believe you, my boy," notoriety) was at this period one of the members of Seymour's company, and played Blueskin to the Darrell of Barry Sullivan in the famous drama of *Jack Sheppard*. When things grew dull in Cook Street, the players, by way of variety, paid flying visits to Waterford, Limerick, and other adjacent towns. Not the least important among the formative influences on Barry Sullivan's character was a *striking* episode which took place during their visit to Clonmel. Utterly discredited by society, actors in those days for the most part led an ultra-bohemian life, and were rather prone to look on the wine when it was red. On the occasion referred to, Sullivan had been indulging in "the native"—

"Fresh from the still, and faithful to its fires,"

with the result that when he went on in *Rory O'More* as De Welskein the smuggler, he lost control of himself, and running amuck in the scrimmage seriously injured one of the attacking party. Grieving over the folly of his conduct as soon as reason had asserted itself, he vowed there and then to eschew strong drink. Reflection showed him that the highway to histrionic fame was littered with premature tombstones, marking the fate of self-indulgent genius. He had strength of character, and religiously kept his resolution to the end.

Equally striking in its way was the incident which occurred during the visit of the Cork Company to Tralee, particulars of which will be best related in Barry

Sullivan's own words. Replying to the toast of his health at a banquet given in his honour by the citizens of Cork, at the Imperial Hotel, on Saturday, December 2, 1878, he said, *inter alia*—"I was going to the theatre, and as I was passing through the principal street, Denny Street, there was a cry of fire. I went down with the other boys—for I was only a big boy at the time—to look at the fire, and presently I saw a very beautiful girl looking out of a window above, and with her a gentleman with a white head. To make a long story short, I WENT THROUGH THE FLAMES and saved those two. (Applause.) Suddenly I remembered that I was wanted at the theatre, which, by the way, was in the Market-house, and I really did not think I had done anything worth remembering. Two or three days afterwards, however, it became known that the boy, the individual, the young man who had saved the lives of this lady and gentleman—I remember that they were Mr. Primrose and Miss Primrose his daughter—it was discovered was young Sullivan, the vulgar little player, who had done this. Up to that time our theatre had been doing very badly, but from that time forward we had crowded houses, I can tell you. (Laughter and applause.)"

It must indeed be reckoned a happy circumstance that we are able to relate this incident on the authority of Sullivan's *ipse dixit*; for some such story has been told about most of the prominent tragedians of the century. As a matter of fact (Creswick bearing witness) we know for certain that a similar adventure befell Gustavus Brooke in his salad days.

On returning to Cork, Sullivan found himself cast for a leading tenor rôle in *Fra Diavolo*, in support of those celebrated dramatic vocalists Leffler, John Wilson, and Miss Romer. He acquitted himself with so much distinction that Wilson, who was a Scotchman, at once gave him a letter of introduction to the well-remembered W. H. Murray, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, then justly considered the wet-nurse *par excellence* of the histrionic child. Thither Barry repaired with all due expedition, and was engaged forthwith under the stipulation that he was not to be too fastidious about his line of business, as progress and diversified work went hand-in-hand. It is worthy of note that during his first season in the Scottish capital Sullivan found himself associated with such artists as Edmund Glover, Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Murray, John Ryder, Sam. Cowell, and the then budding Sims Reeves, who played walking gentlemen at a salary of something under a pound a-week. But there were no princely emoluments for the poor player in those days. Sullivan himself was engaged by Murray to play "second heavies" and render general assistance in musical pieces at the modest weekly stipend of thirty shillings. Kept, however, for some little time after his arrival at the prompter's box, he did not make his first appearance in Edinburgh until the 24th November, 1841, when he played Red Rody in *The Robber's Wife*. During Charles Kean's engagement in March, 1842, he was the Bates to the star's Beverley in *The Gamester*, and subsequently appeared at the Adelphi during the off-season at the Royal, acting there the part of Gaston in *Richelieu*, when Lord Lytton's play was presented for the

first time in the Northern Athens. Seekers after the curious will be interested to learn that when Henry Irving made his first appearance at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal on February 7, 1857 (after a brief novitiate in Sunderland), it was in this self-same part; and that the wily Cardinal on that particular occasion was personated by none other than the hero of these pages, then a fixed star in the theatrical firmament. Moreover, it may afford food for reflection to adherents of either tragedian to learn that both buffooned it in their time in pantomime on these classic boards, a period of thirteen years naturally intervening. In the *Pall Mall Gazette* of May 4, 1891, there appeared a sympathetic sketch, entitled "The Late Mr. Barry Sullivan, by One Who Knew Him," in the course of which the writer represented the dead tragedian as having said to him a couple of years previously, "Do you remember that I told you the other day that the prominent actor who had not supported me was Henry Irving? Well, I was introduced to Mr. Irving, with whom I was much charmed, and on my making that remark to him, he replied, 'Pardon me; when once you were acting in Liverpool I made my *debut* at the same theatre, and recollect I held a banner!' No wonder I didn't know him again!" Of which statement the best that can be said is that it is neither true nor well found. Here is Mr. Irving's contradiction:—

LYCEUM THEATRE,
22nd May, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR,

Let me thank you for your kind letter. You are quite correct in your statement. The only occasion on which I ever

played with the late Mr. Barry Sullivan was at Edinburgh, in 1857, when I played Gaston to his Richelieu. The Liverpool story is, of course, a silly one.

Believe me, dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. J. Lawrence, Esq.

H. IRVING.

With the secession of Ryder, in the autumn of 1842, Manager Murray promoted Barry Sullivan to "first heavies," and in that capacity he was not exempted from appearing in the opening of the Christmas pantomime of *Johnnie Fa ; or, Harlequin and the King of the Gipsies*. Considering that the budding tragedian had frequently to "get-up" as many as eighteen new parts a-week, it is matter for little surprise that, notwithstanding many an "all-night sitting," he was occasionally weak in his lines, and more often than not far from letter-perfect. During the engagement of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, a local sheet called *The Prompter*, in noticing the performance of *Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady*, launched out at poor Barry, who, in the critic's estimation, "not only acted most abominably, but was sadly deficient in the text; indeed, once or twice we were afraid he would absolutely break down." Among the great variety of parts which fell to his lot at this period were Sir Francis Vernon in *Rob Roy* (to the Bailie Nicol Jarvie of Mackay); Sebastian in *Guy Mannering* (to the Henry Bertram of Sims Reeves and the Lucy of Miss Woolgar); Drayton in *Grandfather Whitehead*; Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*; and Beauseant in *The Lady of Lyons*.

To the last hour of his waking consciousness Barry Sullivan always spoke of Helen Faucit as his *beau-ideal* of an actress, and was never ashamed to confess that he had learned more from watching her in his tyro days than in musing over the methods of all the other stars, male and female, put together. November 14, 1843, marks the date of their earliest professional association—the scene, the Edinburgh Theatre Royal. It is noteworthy, furthermore, that Barry Sullivan was present in the green-room of the same house when the great tragedienne first met her future husband, Mr. (now Sir Theodore) Martin.

Becoming dissatisfied with his position under Murray our hero determined to seek his fortune elsewhere, and so appealed to his Edinburgh friends in a farewell benefit on May 30, 1844, when the bill comprised four pieces, besides incidental songs and dances, and a speech from the *beneficiaire*. His own share of the evening's entertainment consisted in playing Kirkpatrick in the tragedy of *Wallace*, and Alexander Massaroni in *The Italian Brigand*. On leaving Edinburgh he took with him an undesirable memento of his sojourn there, in the shape of a scar on the cheek occasioned by an unlucky pistol-shot in a stage scrimmage. One whose face already possessed that perfect handsomeness which Mirabeau, with supreme self-satisfaction, once said was only found in the pock-marked man, could readily have dispensed with such a reminder. Subsequently he fulfilled engagements at Paisley, Dundee, Aberdeen, Montrose, and Arbroath, and while still a minor was engaged as leading man for the City Theatre, Glasgow.

Here he first became acquainted with his life-long friend Mr. John Coleman, who gave some details of the engagement in a sympathetic "In Memoriam" sketch (in *The Theatre* for June, 1891), which we cannot do better than quote :—

"We first met in Glasgow," writes Mr. Coleman, "where John Henry Anderson—the Wizard of the North—had built upon the Green, within a stone's-throw of the Saut Market, immortalised by Bailie Nicol Jarvie, a beautiful temple of Thespis, called 'The City Theatre,' for the purpose of opposing the eccentric Alexander, who had for many years monopolised the drama in St. Mungo's City. At the period to which I refer there was in this vicinity an eruption of theatres, licensed and unlicensed—theatres to suit every taste and every pocket. At the very corner of the Green stood the Adelphi, a very fine theatre, built for David Prince Miller, the famous showman, whom Alexander had made a martyr by consigning him to the Tolbooth for having acted without a license. Exactly opposite the Adelphi stood Mumford's 'Bawbee Show,' where a very excellent company of comedians were wont to give three performances a-night of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, or *Romeo*, for three half-pence! . . . Anderson had been himself an actor—an ambitious and disappointed one—and he could no more keep out of the theatre than a thirsty cat can keep her whiskers out of a bowl of cream. He had no sooner made a small fortune by conjuring than he lost it by management. Upon this occasion, determining to carry everything before him, he engaged a double company in every department. There was an opera company, headed by our great

singer, Sims Reeves ; and a dramatic company, headed by the rival tragedians Mr. James Bennett and Mr. Barry Sullivan, and the then young and majestic Laura Addison, and Mrs. Ada Dyas. Anderson had engaged two ladies and two gentlemen for every line of business, with the intention of having his pick of the best, retaining the successful and dismissing the unsuccessful candidates for public favour. As nearly every member of the company had taken long and expensive journeys from England, much discontent ensued, and the theatre was a perfect hot-bed of strife. The disaffection was increased by the unprecedented occurrence that nearly every member of the dramatic company was coerced into going on the stage for the chorus in the various operas. The opera season lasted for a month, during the greater portion of which Sullivan, Bennett, and Miss Laura Addison were condemned to inglorious inactivity. Sullivan particularly resented this, and as I sympathised with him he poured his wrongs into the ears of a not unwilling listener. . . . When he accepted the engagement for Glasgow, he anticipated undivided sway ; so did Bennett, and their indignation was unbounded when they found themselves pitted against each other.

“At length the rival tragedians were notified that they were to open as Claude Melnotte, and Miss Addison and Mrs. Dyas were noticed for Pauline, but the play was to be done after the opera of *The Bohemian Girl*. There were more rows, but the man who pays is usually master, and the Wizard was no exception to this rule.

“Bennett was the older and more experienced actor, and, though anything but a typical Claude, took the popular fancy. Sullivan ran his rival hard in Claude, Hamlet, and Romeo, but when it came to Macbeth, Othello, and parts of that class, he was pronounced to be an admirable walking gentleman actor of tragedy, while Bennett was proclaimed to be a tragedian. The result was (and a very cruel result too) that Sullivan was dismissed and Bennett remained ‘monarch of all he surveyed.’ This was a wrong which Sullivan never forgot, never forgave, even when time had reversed this unjust verdict. Only a few years ago, while dining *tête-a-tête* at the Savage Club, this subject cropped up, and instantly lashed him to a white heat.”

Good actor as he always was (and even in the later sixties his Iago was a superb impersonation), poor Bennett never had the luck to reach the height clearly indicated by his early promise. When given the chance of his life by Jarrett and Palmer, who engaged him to play Richard III. in a splendidly-mounted production of Shakespeare’s play at Niblo’s Garden, in April, 1871, his courage forsook him, and he failed ignominiously. Truly the mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. Barry Sullivan could have well afforded to blot out all recollection of Anderson’s injustice when he saw with what unrelenting cruelty Time had quashed the manager’s decree. By an irony of circumstance when he received that unlucky sword-thrust while acting Richard III. at Drury Lane, in 1876, necessitating his retirement from the cast, the obscure under-study who took up his part was none other than

the quondam Glasgow favourite upon whom Anderson had beamed with a beneficent eye.

After his summary dismissal from the City Theatre, Sullivan experienced a period of inaction, but was eventually engaged by a committee to manage the Aberdeen Theatre. During his sojourn in Scotland his command of the brogue had enabled him to make a gratifying hit in an Irish character part; indeed, his success was so pronounced that he was strongly advised to seek the path of fame and fortune after the manner of Tyrone Power. But he had already conceived Shakespearian aspirations, and, not foreseeing the acceptance of Brooke both as tragedian and Irish character actor, feared to create a reputation which he thought might blast his ambition in the higher walks of the drama. Meantime we find him in the Granite City, toiling hard, developing his powers, sparing himself but little. Finding, however, at the expiration of two years that his material fortunes, like the farmer drinking his landlord's claret, got "no forrader," he crossed the Border, and opened his first English engagement under one Oppenheim at Wakefield. It proved anything but auspicious, as a demand for salary in arrears on the part of our hero, one night during the performance of the tragedy of *Bertram*, led to fisticuffs with the manager, and abruptly brought the evening's entertainment to a close. Not a whit disheartened at this fiasco, Sullivan very shortly afterwards succeeded in obtaining an engagement from Mr. Robert Roxby, of the Theatre Royal, Williamson Square, Liverpool, as leading man, at a salary of £5 per week. Among the other members of the stock company

at that period were Messrs. Artaud, Mortimer, Fitzroy, Willis, Suter, W. S. Branson, J. W. Benson, James Lunt, Mrs. Seyton, Miss Treble, Miss Murray, and Miss K. Love. By some mistake Sullivan was announced to make his first appearance at the Royal on May 7, 1847, as Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*—a part he had never studied, and, moreover, greatly disliked. But making the best of a bad job he tackled the character, and, as he once remarked in after years, “if he had selected the part himself he could not have made a bigger success.” Of this performance Mr. Coleman, who was at that time a member of Copeland’s Company at the Amphitheatre, writes as follows:—

“While I was occupied with rehearsal he (Sullivan) came to renew our acquaintance, and to borrow an indispensable ‘property,’ or, to be precise, to borrow a pair of black silk tights for Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*, in which gloomy play he was about to open. By-the-way, those same tights that very same season did duty to introduce Robert Brough to the stage as Lampedo in *The Honeymoon*, after which inauspicious event—for poor Bob did not set the Mersey on fire—they went the way of all—tights. They passed from my gaze and I saw them no more.

“The gallery was a shilling in those days, and thither I went with a friend to give the new tragedian ‘a hand.’ Sir Edward Mortimer was no more suited to Sullivan than it was to John Kemble. Latterly it has been the fashion to decry Barry Sullivan as being stilted, formal, and old-fashioned, but, as I have shown already, in Glasgow he had been pronounced a walking gentleman

actor of tragedy, and unquestionably his style was too modern and too natural for this mouthing, super-sensitive hypocondriac. Of late years I have seen little of Sullivan's acting, but when I knew him at his best he was vigorous, vivacious, and versatile. His Charles Surface, Young Rapid, Petruchio, Benedick, and Falconbridge were hard to beat; and his Long Tom Coffin, William in *Black-eyed Susan*, Rory O'More, Myles-na-Coppaleen, and Shaun-the-Post were performances of unapproachable excellence.

"The second performance in Liverpool was Jaffier in *Venice Preserved*. There was a miserable house, and the good old tragedian who played Pierre was wretchedly imperfect, while the beautiful but unfortunate woman who played Belvidera was worse; but Sullivan was a tower of strength in his knowledge of the text, and pulled the play through to a successful termination. From that moment I felt convinced he only needed time and opportunity to make his way—the world itself comes round to him who knows how to wait, and at length it came round to him."

Subsequently, when the management of the Theatre Royal passed into the hands of Mr. W. R. Copeland, who also presided over the fortunes of the Amphitheatre, Sullivan transferred his services to that sterling manager. Acting principally at the Amphitheatre his reputation and popularity in Liverpool grew apace; so much so that Copeland before his death made him promise that whenever he revisited his old friends he would never play at any other house so long as it remained in the hands of his family. The tragedian

religiously kept his word, making his last appearance at the Amphitheatre, prior to its reconstruction, on November 15, 1880, when he sustained the character of Hamlet to Miss Maud Brennan's Ophelia. To his credit be it said, he never forgot the kindness of those early Liverpool friends who, by dint of liberal encouragement, helped him on the way to fame and fortune. Years afterwards, when he was acting in Melbourne, Mr. Edward Whitty, a brilliant Liverpool journalist, who wrote "The Stranger in Parliament," went out there with the view of arresting the ravages of consumption. The Whittys had been paramount among those who had supported the tragedian in the Press in the late forties, and he did his best to smooth the last moments of the sufferer. Finally, when all was over, he caused a handsome monument to be erected over the remains of his friend. Now a memorial to himself—showing with eloquent muteness that the man who never forgave an injury never forgot a kindness.

In the midst of his popularity with the Liverpudlians, Sullivan was induced by a tempting offer from Knowles, of Manchester, to transfer his services to the Theatre Royal in that city, where he shared the lead with his compatriot Gustavus Brooke. Here his success was as pronounced as it was instantaneous. Making his first appearance on October 9, 1847, as Stukely in *The Gamester*, to the Mr. and Mrs. Beverley of Charles Kean and his wife, he was delighted to find that all the honours of the evening were not reserved for the stars, with whom he had the felicity to share the distinction of a recall. The good impression conveyed at the

outset was amply confirmed on the 26th of the same month, when Sullivan played Hamlet for the first time on any stage, having previously studied the part for upwards of seven years. Basing his conception of the rôle on the theory that the Prince was of sound mind and only pretended madness for a special purpose, the youthful tragedian invested the character with much new business of a striking nature. This he claimed in after years had been copied unblushingly by many famous actors. Speaking of this early performance to a Manchester interviewer in 1886, he said—"I showed them for the first time the reason of Hamlet's sudden change in demeanour as he discovers Polonius and the King eavesdropping, and at once concludes that Ophelia is concerned in the plot. The 'hawk and handsaw' reading, too, I altered. During my studies I tried to thoroughly grasp the meaning of each sentence, but I was unable to find any intelligible meaning in the line as it appeared in the ordinary text. Taking into consideration the context and the situation, I, as Hamlet, believe that Guildenstern and Rosencrantz had been specially sent 'to pump the Prince,' who discovered their purpose, and pumped them instead, and I, therefore, when the climax was reached, said, 'I am but mad nor'-nor'-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a heron; pshaw!' the 'pschaw' being the outcome of the disgust Hamlet felt at being treated in such a manner. I felt there was a meaning and a point in the line, when delivered in this way which was entirely wanting in the 'handsaw' reading. So, too, with the Ghost, who tells

Hamlet he is 'doomed for a certain time to walk the night, and for the day confined to fast in fire.' This I felt was absurd, and I made my Ghost say, 'confined fast in fire,' thereby getting rid of the difficulty, and making intelligible what had previously been obscure. I could go through the play, and show many instances where the lines had become encrusted with absurdities, arising from the alteration of ignorant commentators and actors; but I have no desire now to enter into any argument or justification of my alterations and restorations." In a word, the new interpretation created considerable stir, culminating in a banquet in Barry Sullivan's honour, at which one of the speakers evoked much laughter by a voluntary confession. During the previous week, he said, he had gone to the Royal to see the guest of the evening as Long Tom Coffin, in the melo-drama of *The Pilot*. He had enjoyed himself immensely. Not even Tippy Cooke, he thought, could have given a better characterisation of the roistering sailor; while the incidental comic song was certainly rendered in excellent fashion. But the idea of such a man attempting to play Hamlet, as he heard he was doing! He must go to the theatre and laugh at him for his presumption. He went, and, contrary to expectation, stayed to pray that the actor might long continue to play the part.

His wish has been gratified. From Sullivan's first performance of Hamlet in Manchester to his last a period of well nigh forty years elapsed, during which he must have played the Dane something like three thousand five hundred times. Of late years his interpretation of the

rôle was among the most attractive in a limited repertory. Consequently it is not surprising to find the critic of the Manchester *Umpire* saying, in October, 1886, that "Sullivan's Hamlet, like the Tower of London, is not a performance; it is an institution." Setting his face sternly against "moods," the tragedian always endeavoured to mete out strict impartiality to all the characters he represented. He professed to have no likes and dislikes, but in his heart of hearts, as his intimates knew, he had decided predilection for the distraught Dane. It was the first character in which his "counterfeit presentment" was given to the world, as they who care to turn over the pages of Halliwell's edition of Shakespeare can verify. Thanks to generous friends and the genius of the sculptor, it will be as Hamlet that future generations of Irishmen will do tribute to the demi-god of their fathers.

Speaking to a friend, on setting out on his last tour, of the great number of times he had acted Hamlet, the tragedian said, "I can assure you I never go through the part without finding in it some new point, some new beauty. Ah! there's no one can appreciate Shakespeare like the man who conscientiously attempts to interpret him. But never in all my career have I gone on the stage to act Hamlet—or indeed any other part—without feeling a very great deal of the nervousness I experienced on the night I first appeared in public." Before leaving the subject it is worthy of passing mention that Sullivan (stimulated by the discussion raised by Devrient's personation of the part) once began to study German with the idea of playing Hamlet



in Berlin; but he gave up the attempt in despair, on finding how many ugly pitfalls presented themselves in the accent.

Harking back, we find that when Brooke appeared for the first time this season, on Monday, October 23, as Claude Melnotte, Barry Sullivan played Richard Parker in the afterpiece of *The Mutiny of the Nore*. Subsequently our hero sustained Pierre to Brooke's Jaffier, and the Ghost to the same actor's Hamlet. When *Ivanhoe* was produced, towards the end of the month, Brooke figured as Isaac of York, and Sullivan as Front de Boeuf. The piece made a hit, but the *Guardian* qualified its praise by hinting that "Mr. Brooke and Mr. Sullivan might have advantageously changed parts as the Jew and the Templar. We think Mr. Brooke would have imparted more of the chivalrous spirit to the latter; and Mr. Sullivan would probably have imparted more intensity with less physical vigour to the ancient Israelite." During November, Sullivan played King Lear to Brooke's Edgar, Cassius to his Brutus, Friar Lawrence to his Romeo, and Werner to his Ulric. While sharing the lead between them at the Royal the two Irishmen were the best of good friends. They occupied a joint dressing-room, and it was there that Brooke made his engagement with Captain Spicer to appear at the Olympic in January, 1848. During the negotiations Sullivan's advice was frequently taken, and he was at length instrumental in persuading his compatriot to accept the London manager's offer.

Again we are constrained to fall back on Mr. Coleman's reminiscences. The genial *raconteur* happened to be

acting at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, precisely at this period, and occasionally fraternised with his old friend at the Alton House—a noted tavern where the members of the three local stock companies were wont to meet. “During our Manchester experiences,” he writes, “Sullivan gave himself no tragic airs, and had a happy knack of saying smart things. One evening as we lounged into the tavern together, an eminent idiot was monopolising the conversation, and his theme was the bard (as it always was); he had the bard on the brain—or would have had, had he possessed one.

“ ‘Ha, Mr. Sullivan,’ exclaimed the bore in triumph, ‘the very man we want! You can set us right on the subject.’

“ ‘What subject?’ enquired Barry.

“ ‘Mrs. Siddons’ reading in *Lady Macbeth*. Was she right or wrong? Should it be “We fail!” or “*We* fail?” What is your opinion, sir?’

“ ‘Can’t possibly express an opinion on the subject.’

“ ‘Why not, sir? Why not?’

“ ‘Because I never *have* failed, and never mean to fail!’

“ ‘Perhaps,’ adds Mr. Coleman, “it cannot be truly affirmed that Sullivan never failed, but he had a bulldog-like tenacity of purpose which never admitted he was beaten.”

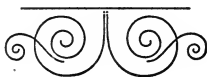
Douglas in those days was as yet in the dawning of its popularity as a holiday resort, although in great vogue among the player folk during the summer months. Thither Barry repaired at the termination of his first season in Manchester, accompanied by Mrs.

Sullivan, who, however, suffered so much on the voyage that she never afterwards went with him on another. When the Theatre Royal re-opened its doors on Monday, October 30, 1848, Glover, from Edinburgh, made his first appearance there as Iago. "Mr. Barry Sullivan," says *The Theatrical Journal*, "played Othello with his usual care, and into many passages threw much beauty." Not long after this George Henry Lewes, critic and philosopher (dubbed, however, by our hero "a poor weak creature"), conceived the insane idea that his shoulders were fated to bear the mantle of the departing Macready. Without any of the fundamental attributes of an actor save the informing quality, Lewes was rash enough to appear as Shylock at the Manchester Theatre Royal on March 10, 1849. Out of respect for his literary reputation Sullivan humoured what he considered a mere whim, and agreed to play seconds to the new-comer. But gossipmongers were not lacking to convey the intelligence to his ears that Lewes at an evening party had announced his intention of taking to the stage permanently, with the view of filling the lamentable hiatus about to be created. Added to this he was represented as speaking so contemptuously of Sullivan that our hero at once stood upon his dignity and notified Wallack, the stage manager, he could no longer consent to act with his traducer. The moral of all which is (pardon the mustiness of the precept) *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*.

Serious complications ensued. On the 26th of the same month a remarkable scene took place at the Theatre Royal, bringing Sullivan's connection with that house

to a sudden close. *The Stranger* was in the bill, and at the end of the performance, Barry, in the name-part, was honoured with a recall. On appearing before the curtain he returned thanks to the audience for their uniform appreciation of his acting, and intimated that it was the last occasion on which he would have the pleasure of acting there. He regretted the fact as the fault was not his, but Mr. H. J. Wallack's, who had treated him unjustly. At this the house began to hiss and groan by way of disapproval of the manager's conduct. Mr. Wallack then appeared, but failed to gain a hearing. Quietness was not restored until Sullivan had made another speech, in which the audience learned that the favourite had been deprived of his benefit night—then a source of considerable pecuniary emolument to an under-paid actor. Although theatrical Manchester was to a man on Sullivan's side in the dispute, the breach was never healed. He left the Royal forthwith; but the Queen's Theatre in Spring Gardens was secured for a night, and Barry, in *Claude Melnotte* and *Petruchio*, had his benefit (and a big one it was) after all. A visit to Edinburgh followed in June, when our hero starred as *Hotspur*, *Young Norval*, *Romeo*, etc., etc. Later on Copeland was only too glad to have him back again in Liverpool, where his reputation in the legitimate increased by leaps and bounds. When Phelps played *King John* in that city during a starring engagement, he was so pleased with Barry's acting as *Falconbridge* that on his return to town he said a good word for the Liverpool tragedian to Benjamin Webster, of the Haymarket, always on the *qui vive* for

rising talent wherewith to recruit his company. Negotiations ensued, with the result that Barry Sullivan made his first appearance in London at the above-mentioned theatre on February 7, 1852. Thus, after twelve years' probation, during which he experienced all the ups and downs of the provincial stock actor, we find our hero, at the age of twenty-eight, safely housed at last in the player's Mecca.



CHAPTER II. (1852-1862).

METROPOLITAN AND EARLY AMERICAN EXPERIENCES.

FOR his *debut* at the Haymarket, Sullivan, not inappropriately, chose the character of Hamlet. Slender and exceedingly graceful in those days, he had most of the physical qualifications for an ideal Dane, save that his voice had not then developed its powers, and was at times thin and reedy. His success at the outset was not particularly pronounced. Said the *Illustrated London News*—"In the present dearth of juvenile actors we were sorry to find that the public took so little interest in the event, and we fear that, notwithstanding the evident merits of Mr. Sullivan, the impression produced by his avatar will be exceedingly small." The critics praised the artistic discrimination with which he delivered the text, and remarked how adroitly he bolstered up his deficiencies by presenting mental ingenuity and picturesque posing in lieu of forceful acting. Happily for him, too, they came down with a dull sickening thud on his innovations and new readings. This aroused public curiosity, and soon all London was flocking to the Haymarket to hear Barry deliver himself of the "hawk from a heron—pshaw!" heresy. On Saturday, the 14th following, we find him acting the leading male rôle (Angiolo the Sculptor) in a new play by Miss Vandenhoff called *Woman's Heart*, the authoress herself appearing as Isolina the

Blind Girl. Other important characters were sustained by Mr. Howe, Mr. Vandenhoff, and Miss Amelia Vining. Evidently his first "creation" (as the phrase goes), Sullivan's Angiolo was replete with power, and did much to save a piece possessing little merit beyond the beauty of its diction. According to the *Illustrated London News*, *Money* was revived in April for the purpose of further testing the merits of the new-comer. "His Evelyn is indeed an intelligent and elegant piece of acting; and we have no doubt that this actor will gradually grow into public favour." As a matter of fact, the comedy was so far successful that it was put up in the bills again for a week, with Sullivan in the same character, during October.

About the most important feature of the Haymarket season 1852-53 was the production of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's comedy, "Not So Bad as We Seem; or, Many Sides to a Character," on Saturday, February 12, 1853. Originally written for the benefit of the Literary Guild, this piece first saw the light at Devonshire House on May 16, 1851, when it was performed before the Queen and Prince Consort, by a distinguished body of amateurs, comprising Mr. Frank Stone, Mr. Dudley Costello, Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Mr. John Forster, Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. E. W. Topham, Mr. Peter Cunningham, Mr. R. H. Horne, Dr. Westland Marston, Mr. Charles Knight, Mr. John Tenniel, and Mr. Wilkie Collins. The play was a brilliant portrait gallery of well-marked types. Choosing for his period the reign of George I., the author had framed his plot to depict the probity of the

literary character. Although the performance was in some measure improved in the hands of the Haymarket Company, the difference between the amateur and the professional rendering was, strange to say, not very remarkable. Howe gave an excellent rendering of Lytton's hero—one David Fallen—a poor poet, fallen from the high estate to that of Grub Street Pamphleteer, and as such beset with trials and temptations. Stuart acted only middling as the Duke of Middlesex, the type of aristocratic pride. Leigh Murray, as Lord Wilmot, a man of fashion (Charles Dickens' original character), succeeded admirably in portraying the reigning mode; he also doubled the part of the unprincipled publisher Curll, whom Pope endowed with dubious immortality. Benjamin Webster, in Mark Lemon's character of Sir Geoffrey Thornside, "a gentleman of good family and estate," gave an impersonation at once clear-cut, subtle, and full of detail. The hit of the piece, however, seems to have been made by Keeley and J. B. Buckstone, in the drunken business allotted in the third act to the two young gentlemen from the city, Mr. Shadowly Softhead and Mr. Goodenough Easy. Sullivan played the part of Hardman, "a rising M.P. and adherent of Sir Robert Walpole," as originally sustained by Mr. John Forster. Although reckoned somewhat stagey and inflexible in the earlier and more level scenes, Barry came out splendidly in the last act—whose burthen rested almost entirely upon him—aroused his audience, and was rewarded with several rounds of hearty applause.

When Webster gave over the reins of management at the Haymarket to Buckstone, our hero elected to swear

allegiance under the new chieftain, and on Thursday, April 7th following, created the part of Travers in Robert Sullivan's sprightly comedy of *Elovements in High Life*. Some idea of the strength of the Haymarket Company at this period may be gathered from the cast of this piece :—

Lord Betterton -	-	-	-	-	Mr. Chippendale.
Lady Betterton-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
Sybilla (their daughter)	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Buckingham.
Travers (an adventurer engaged to)	}				Mr. Barry Sullivan.
Sybilla					
Tom Singleheart	-	-	-	-	Mr. Howe.
The Widow Lovelock	-	-	-	-	Miss Reynolds.
Catherine (Lady Betterton's daughter)					Miss Louisa Howard
Charles Perfect (Lord Betterton's son)					Mr. Wm. Farren.
Jemmy Tulip	-	-	-	-	Mr. J. B. Buckstone.
Captain Gawk (of the Unattached)					Mr. Compton.

Having entered upon the management of the theatre with the intention of giving a series of dramatic novelties from the most eminent authors, Buckstone, later on in the same month, produced Browning's poetic play, *Colombe's Birthday*, with Barry Sullivan in the principal male rôle of Valence the Advocate, and Helen Faucit as Colombe of Ravenstein, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves. Sweet and pure in sentiment, although slight in structure, the piece did credit to the theatre, and met with instantaneous success. The two principal dramatic artists manifested great power in the scene where Valence carries an offer of marriage to the Duchess from the genial soldier of fortune, Prince Berthold, although loving her with the deepest passion himself. Diplomacy urges her to accept an offer which will

eventually make her an Empress, but in doing so she betrays her real feelings and urges the advocate to declare his love. It is satisfactory to learn that while on all hands this scene was pronounced to be one of the most delicious within recollection, the rendering of it by Barry Sullivan and Helen Faucit was considered fully equal to its merits.

Novelty being quite the order of the day under Buckstone, another new piece (with an interesting if somewhat sombre plot), called *The Civil Kindness*, saw the light on Monday, June 6, when Sullivan gave a painstaking and meritorious personation of the hapless Giulio. Unfortunately the serious dialogue of Mrs. Crowe's five-act play was rather too long-winded, and not always to the point; but some capital comic relief was afforded by the acting of Buckstone, Corri, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Miss E. Chaplin. A month or two afterwards Barry repaired to the Standard Theatre (his first appearance on transpontine boards), where he played a principal part in the revival of Bennett's drama *Retribution*. Returning to his old love, the Haymarket, in 1855, he made somewhat of a hit as Claude Melnotte to Helen Faucit's Pauline, in May; and on Monday, June 11, created the character of Franklyn the amorous and distraught hunchback in John Saunders's fine poetical play of *Love's Martyrdom*. "Mr. Sullivan," says the finnikin critic of the *Illustrated London News*, "as the deformed hero, laboured hard, and gave a mechanical outline correct enough to a part which in the hands of Edmund Kean (!) would have been instinct with life and electricity. For his diligence and good intention,

he shall receive full praise from us, and we trust that, by *steady practice and submission to criticism*, he may become an improving actor. Let him, however, above all, resist a tendency to exaggeration." After appearing as Jaques to Helen Faucit's Rosalind, he had another new part on Monday, July 23, in the hero of Heraud's five-act domestic drama of *Wife or No Wife*. Miss Edith Heraud, daughter of the dramatist, created the rôle of Olympia, a lady of the period of Queen Anne, who, having secretly married a nobleman whose position ranked much higher than her own, laid up for herself a store of trouble by incontinently losing her marriage certificate. "Mr. Barry Sullivan as the hero," says the critic just cited, "was zealous and painstaking; though in the last scene, which requires, indeed, some central incident to collect all its meaning into a focus, he was not so effective as we could have desired."

Early in the October following, Barry Sullivan was engaged by Mr. E. T. Smith to play Tihrak in Fitzball's grand Egyptian spectacle *Nitocris* at Drury Lane. This new play was lavishly mounted—a rare thing in those days for aught save revivals. But despite the fine acting of Sullivan, E. F. Edgar, Stuart, and Miss Glyn, it proved a failure through clumsy stage management, and resulted in a loss to the treasury of about £2,000. Theatres in London were not nearly so numerous forty years ago as they are now, and the salaries of important artists were a great deal more moderate. Hence Barry, after remaining at Drury Lane for some little time, found himself unable to obtain another remunerative metropolitan engagement, and with the cares of a

regularly-increasing family thick upon him, had to resort to the provinces. Even there his name was not much of a draw at the outset. Mr. Coleman tells us that he once constituted the sole box audience on Barry's benefit night at Wigan, when there was only twelve shillings, all told, in the house. "I had my struggles in my time," the tragedian remarked to a Birmingham interviewer in 1886. "I knew what it was to play to empty benches when I first effected a start and affected the 'star.' But empty benches never discouraged me. It did not matter if the audience was thirty, or three hundred, or three thousand, I always did my best. The consequence was people came again, and every time I returned to a town I found the audience larger and larger, until at last I met the success for which I had striven and waited."

On his return to London in 1857, Sullivan held office for a time under Phelps at Sadlers' Wells, where he sustained a variety of important characters in the legitimate. Unable, however, to secure a firm foothold in the metropolis he decided to hazard his fortunes in America, and setting sail for New York made his first appearance at the Broadway Theatre in that city, on November 22, 1858, in the character of Hamlet. Personations of Claude Melnotte, Macbeth, Shylock, Petruchio, and Richard III. followed. On December 20, he opened at Burton's New Theatre in the same city as Hamlet, subsequently playing Beverley, Benedick, and King Lear. At the latter house he was principally supported by Wm. Davidge, J. H. Allen, Fanny Morant, and Ada Clifton. Said the tragedian, in speaking of

this visit in after years—"I went alone without a great company, and without hundreds of tons of luggage, but my success was remarkable. I gained fame and dollars too, for what money I made, I made for myself." Nevertheless, in some of the cities of the Union afterwards visited Sullivan encountered a spirit of malignant persecution. During his first engagement at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, he was charged with spitting at Mr. Harry Perry (Richmond) in the last act of *Richard III.*, the partisans of that actor construing a characteristic morsel of stage business on the part of the Hibernian tragedian into a personal insult to their favourite. There can be no doubt, furthermore, that the ill-feeling excited by this mistaken impression was considerably aggravated by a remarkable passage at arms which Sullivan had at this time, in this very theatre, with the great Edwin Forrest. When not acting himself, the stentorian American tragedian had an unpleasant habit of going to see whatever rival player happened to be in the neighbourhood, and of truculently expressing his disapproval of any passage not delivered to his liking. This unlucky penchant led to serious consequences. Under the delusion that Macready had subsidised the metropolitan press to write him down, Forrest hissed the eminent tragedian's Hamlet at Edinburgh in 1846, and by his personal animus created a bitterness that ere long developed into an international question. It culminated, as most students of theatrical history know, in the Astor Place Opera House riot of May, 1849, when thirty innocent beings lost their lives, and Macready himself had a narrow escape.

Happening to be in Philadelphia during Sullivan's visit, Forrest went to see our hero's Hamlet, and was so disgusted with the resemblance to Macready (whom Barry followed in the part), and the many new readings, that during the first two acts he annoyed both players and audience by his intermittent snorts of disapprobation. Sullivan bided his time, however, and soon had his revenge. On coming to a portion of the text in the second act having direct allusion to Polonius, Hamlet drew Rosencrantz and Guildenstern aside, and striding towards the box in which Forrest sat, made a contemptuous gesture in that direction, and keeping strictly to the text, said—"Do you see that great baby yonder? He is not yet out of his swaddling clouts." Lawrence Barrett, on whose authority we relate this incident, adds, "mingled hisses and applause were the actor's reward for what was certainly 'a hit, a palpable hit,' although perhaps not in very good taste." To which the best that can be said is perhaps that one does not give fair words to the would-be garrotter, should a bludgeon prove handy.

To Routledge's Christmas Annual, *The Stage Door* (1880), Barry Sullivan contributed an interesting morsel of reminiscence, entitled *A Wrestling Match*, which, as it relates to this period, and is about the only specimen of his literary effort known to the author, may well be cited here in full.

"Some years ago," he writes, "while on my first professional tour of America, I played an engagement in New Orleans, and my Shylock night will be ever memorable to me, from an occurrence that took place in

the St. Charles's Hotel, my temporary abode. During my short stay in the city I had made the acquaintance of a Mr. Rose, a well-to-do man, a great lover of the drama, and a pleasant companion.

“On the evening in question my new-found friend had taken seats for the performance, and we were enjoying a quiet chat on the subject of the play, while Mrs. Rose, who had just left us, had gone to her room to make some necessary changes in her toilette.

“While we were thus pleasantly occupied, a friend of Rose's, somewhat overcharged with wine, came into the bar, ‘liquored up’ once more, and with his irrelevant remarks soon put Shakespeare to flight. He had been to a wrestling match, had caught the spirit of the entertainment, and began challenging everybody to throw him. To my surprise, he eventually challenged Rose, a more powerful man than himself, to try a fall there and then, on the spot.

“Rose, in the kindest manner possible, evaded the challenge. ‘No, no,’ ‘not now,’ ‘not here,’ ‘some other time,’ etc., etc.; but all to no purpose, unless, perhaps, to make the man more insisting and determined to have his own way; indeed, he went so far as to seize Rose by the collar to compel him to wrestle, whether he liked to do so or not.

“At last, after being taunted and laid hold of several times, Rose, losing all patience, closed with his tormentor, and threw him heavily. The man, whose name I forget, raised himself slowly, and, without saying a word, lurched sulkily out of the bar. I congratulated Rose on having got rid of such an insolent and impor-

fortunate person, and a few minutes afterwards took my leave, and strolled to the theatre.

“Half-an-hour had scarcely elapsed when, to my horror, I heard in my dressing-room of the tragical termination to this impromptu match. Rose remained in the bar, waiting till his wife should be ready, and talking with his friends. His antagonist returned, walked deliberately towards him, and, without uttering a word, took out a revolver and shot him in the back. Rose turned around quickly, and advanced upon his assassin—another shot! Still he advanced, and still another shot. The next instant Rose had seized the murderer, wrenched the pistol from his grasp, and with it struck him a crushing blow upon the forehead. Again was the coward’s weapon raised against himself, and with the second terrible stroke both men fell to the ground. His left hand still clutching the wretch’s throat, Rose, with a dying effort, got to his knees, raised the revolver for yet another blow when, with a convulsive quiver, his whole body seemed to collapse, and he fell dead across the face of his murderer.

“The tragedy was so suddenly, so swiftly enacted, that interference or prevention had been impossible.

“The corse of poor Rose was borne to his rooms. While ascending the stairs the sad little procession was met by the unfortunate wife, gaily dressed to go to the theatre with the husband she had left but a short half-hour before, in full and happy life, and whose cruel murder she thus suddenly and hideously realised.

“That part of the picture I will not dwell upon; it may be better imagined than described by me. The

wretched man, who had taken such terrible revenge for his self-sought and well-merited defeat, never spoke again; he died three days after his victim—slain, and righteously slain, by his own murderous weapon.”

Among Barry Sullivan's best cherished recollections of his first tour in the New World was his visit to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Sothern had entered upon the management of the theatre, and soon found his evil star in the ascendant. Even his own Dundreary had failed to draw, principally owing to the fact that the English officers in garrison there, who were the mainstay of the theatre, deemed the personation an outrageous caricature of the British aristocracy. Having exhausted all his resources in the endeavour to please these capricious patrons, Sothern was at his wits' end, when Barry arrived to fulfil a week's engagement. Our hero's attraction, however, was such that he remained close on seven weeks, and piloted poor Dundreary's craft into still waters before leaving.

Returning home with a solid balance at his bankers', besides many memento nuggets, the gift of enthusiastic friends in California, Sullivan made his reappearance in London at the St. James's Theatre, on Monday, August 20, 1860, as Hamlet. It has been generally felt by metropolitan playgoers that most accepted stage favourites, on their return from a prolonged course of starring in out-of-the-way and uncultured districts, prove to have coarsened in style. In such cases the deterioration usually manifests itself in a desire upon the part of the artist to enlarge the area of his canvas, so to speak, and to attain breadth of treatment by slap-

dash painting. Strange to say, Sullivan on his return exhibited none of these signs and tokens, despite the fact that during his lengthened tour of North America he had fretted and strutted it for the delectation of the miner and the lumberman, the gold-digger of California, the backwoodsman, and even (tell it not in Gath!) for the copper-coloured roamers of the prairies. Hence *The Times*, in commenting upon his reappearance, said —“All the qualities that have rendered his memory estimable in the minds of playgoers he retains to their full extent. He is a careful, correct, and perspicuous declaimer, turning to good account his natural advantages of voice and figure; and he is, moreover, thoroughly versed in the routine of the part, which he has evidently studied with laudable assiduity. Though he makes no particular attempt to startle his audience, he is neither tame nor listless, and all that he does is well considered and quite to the purpose. A numerous audience witnessed his performance of Hamlet, and greeted him with a hearty welcome.”

On the termination of his London engagement, Barry made a prosperous tour of the provinces. Towards the middle of January, 1862, he, in the face of inclement weather and formidable counter-attractions, laid the foundations of an abiding popularity in Belfast. For fully a quarter of a century afterwards he remained the God of the Ulsterman's idolatry, and during many pleasant Christmas-tides upheld the Shakespearian banner in the Northern capital what time other cities were indulging in the inanities of pantomime.

CHAPTER III. (1862-1891).

IN THE COLONIES AND ELSEWHERE.

ON G. V. Brooke's return to England, in 1861, after a lengthened period of unparalleled success in the Colonies (marred only by his business incapacity and ultra-bohemianism), the larger cities of Australasia had, for a time, a heavy miss of a first-class tragedian. Seeing an opportunity to enlarge his experiences, Barry Sullivan at once took his tide at the flood, and entering into negotiations with Mr. J. Wilton, lessee of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, agreed to make his *debut* in "the Australian Drury Lane." His success was by no means assured at the outset, however, as Colonial playgoers were not sufficiently off with the old love to be on with the new. In other words, they still retained wistful yearnings towards the prodigal who was fated never to return. But Sullivan was not of that fibre to become disheartened under momentary coldness. It was an uphill fight, but he conquered by sheer tenacity and strength of will.

Mr. W. H. Campbell, a prosperous Ulsterman at present residing in San Francisco, writes as follows, in an interesting communication to the author:—

"I frequently met and was pretty well acquainted with both G. V. Brooke and Barry Sullivan during the golden early days of Victoria, better known then as Port Philip, the 'Australian Felix' of the veteran pioneer,

John Pascoe Fawcner. Brooke was undoubtedly the most popular actor who ever set foot in the Colonies, but he had left for good before Sullivan's arrival there. The contrast between the two men, both Irishmen as they were, was very striking. Brooke was good-natured, convivial, careless, and had moments of superb inspiration. Sullivan, on the other hand, was practical, energetic, abstemious, methodical. He was for the most part painfully aware of his importance, had immense vim, aimed high, and succeeded in reaching the grand goal of his ambition.

"The days when genteel comedy was at its best in Melbourne found Sullivan, with Joe Jefferson,* Fanny Cathcart, Heir, and a galaxy of lesser talent playing at the Princess's. I think they opened in *Money*—Barry as Evelyn, and Jefferson, Graves. A little supper was tendered these gentlemen and the two captains commanding the ships which brought them out to Australia. Of those who made merry that night only Mr. Jefferson, Captain D. H. Johnston, R.N.R., and myself remain to tell the tale. H. B. Donaldson Sandridge was there, and my fellow-survivors doubtless remember how he and the genial C. L. Throckmorton went through the farcical ceremony of marrying the landlord's daughter over the broomstick for the special entertainment of our theatrical guests.

"It fell to my lot to propose Mr. Sullivan's health. In doing so I alluded to a keen, fussy controversy then

* Passing strange is it that, from first to last, in Jefferson's delightful Autobiography no mention is made of Barry Sullivan's name.

going on in the newspapers over a dispute between the tragedian and the management of the Royal, in which the ladies of the company were involved—owing to Sullivan's methods in regard to them being at variance with those formerly practised. My endeavour was to throw oil on the troubled waters, and bring the unhappy dispute to an end. So I ventured to suggest to our friend the desirability of compromise, or such concession as might please the ladies and satisfy popular prejudice and clamour.

“Jumping up, the tragedian replied in these characteristic words: ‘Do you think, sir’—addressing me directly—‘that *I* will concede? No, sir! Never, sir!! Never for a moment, sir!!! Do you mean to say that I, Barry Sullivan, must stoop down to the people of Melbourne? No, sir! Far from it—I’ll bring them up to me!’ And he carried out his point, as he always did, by sheer pluck, energy, and ‘go.’

“Though very abstemious, Mr. Sullivan was not a total abstainer. I on many occasions supped with him, at Spiers & Pond’s Café Royal, when he invariably partook of a broiled steak or chop, accompanied by a pint or half-pint of Guinness’s Dublin porter. He was fond of praise, though impatient of adverse criticism. ‘Did you see my *Don Cæsar*?’ he asked me on the street, a few days after the production of *Don Cæsar de Bazan*. He fished for a compliment, and received a well-merited one.”

Remaining long enough in Melbourne to win all lovers of the legitimate on his side, Barry, early in 1863, made his way to Sydney, where he met with such

speedy and unequivocal success that he returned there again and again. On retracing his steps to the Victorian capital, he, for the first time in his eventful career, took upon himself the cares of responsible management, having secured a lease of the Colonial Drury Lane from Mr. Ambrose Kyte, the proprietor. Unlike poor Brooke, who had burnt his fingers severely in such enterprises, Sullivan never had cause to regret his plunge into the hazardous. Securing the services of such able henchmen as Mr. Hennings and Mr. H. R. Harwood, he began his reign at the Melbourne Theatre Royal on March 7, 1863, producing a series of brilliant Shakespearian revivals which more than recalled the palmy days of his predecessor and friend. Just as our hero had got his barque well under weigh, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean came to the Queen city of the South to renew for many an old colonial happy memories of his boyhood. Manager Coppin (Brooke's quondam ally) had arranged for these eminent artists to appear in the Olympic Theatre, more familiarly known—owing to its peculiar shape and the material from which it was constructed—as “The Iron Pot.” To most opposition managers the prospect would have proved uninviting. But Sullivan, nothing daunted, threw down the gauntlet to the elder tragedian, and set about producing all the pieces in his repertory. From all accounts it would appear that only in one part (that of Louis XI.), did Kean, then in the decline of his powers, seem to have the advantage over his more youthful antagonist.

It is satisfactory to find that Mr. W. H. Campbell's personal estimate of the Sullivan of the sixties agrees

in the main with the impression left upon the mind of Mr. James Smith, the Nestor of Australian dramatic critics, who has now been associated with the fortunes of *The Argus* for fully forty years. In a communication to the author, written some twelve months ago, *apropos* to our hero's career in the colonies, this accomplished journalist says, *inter alia*—"As a *man* I did not like him. He was hard, cold, and repellent; and his vanity amounted to a disease. He seriously believed that the British stage had only produced three great actors—David Garrick, W. C. Macready, and himself! His self-love was as irritable as it was irritating, and his jealousy of other actors was almost childish. I could never detect any of the fire of genius in his performances; but he possessed great talent, and that 'infinite capacity for taking pains' which come very near genius. Short of that he was one of the best all-round actors I ever saw—equally good in tragedy, comedy, Irish drama, and farce. He was also an admirable manager. He was master of all the duties and detail connected with a theatre, from those of the call-boy upwards. He was very frugal, perhaps penurious; for instance, he would see that no candle ends were wasted behind the scenes. And no doubt he was in the right, for 'colonials' are naturally wasteful and unthrifty; and poor Brooke's loss of the fortune he made here was in part attributable to his carelessness and his toleration of extravagance and pillage in his subordinates. In spite of his jealousy, Barry Sullivan, while managing the Theatre Royal in this city, surrounded himself with an excellent stock company—such a company, indeed, as could not be

organised now—a company scarcely less complete and efficient than Daly's. Every piece he produced was handsomely mounted, thoroughly rehearsed, and effectively played, and I have always understood that he went home with a small fortune. I do not suppose his personal expenses ever exceeded £2 or £3 per week. His temper was as vile as Macready's, without being conscious of and penitent for it, as that actor was. I wrote an adverse criticism of some performance of Sullivan's, and a day or two afterwards I got into the compartment of a railway carriage on a suburban line, when he opened out upon me a torrent of coarse abuse in the presence of half-a-dozen other occupants of the compartment. His object was evidently to provoke me to strike him. But I preserved my own self-control, and ironically complimented him on his gentlemanly conduct and demeanour; and he looked and acted like a man obsessed by an evil spirit. Only a few months before he had dined at my house in company with Joseph Jefferson and Sir Charles Gavan Duffy.

“Sullivan's reign at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, was certainly not the least brilliant episode in the history of that theatre. He was one of the most hard-working both of managers and actors. He never spared himself, and he did not spare others. Indeed, he could not have succeeded or have fulfilled his duty to the public had he been indulgent or remiss. There was a good deal of personal magnetism in the man: he could be almost winsome in his manners; but you felt that it was the attractiveness of the ‘well-graced actor.’”

In after years Sullivan always looked back with pleasant memories to his four years' sojourn in the Colonies. In face of the opposition encountered at the outset he was justified in referring with pride to the fact that in Melbourne alone during that time he had performed with acceptance for fully a thousand nights. Obviously enough, like most histrionic birds of passage, he was delighted with the climate. In speaking of his Australian experiences to Mr. J. W. Flynn, of Cork, he said, not many years ago—"I often came off the stage at night hot after an exciting combat, and having hastily changed my costume for a suit of thin clothes, left the theatre and drove miles in an open vehicle without a thought of catching cold."

To about a round dozen of the world's greatest players (of whom the names of Garrick, Peg Woffington, and Adrienne Lecouvreur come readiest to mind) has it been given to enjoy posthumous theatrical notoriety as the central figure in some ingenious "fairy tale" of the dramatist. But to one only, so far as we know, has it been given "to enter living into his immortality." Not very many moons had waned after our hero had bidden goodbye to his friends in Australasia ere his counterfeit presentment stepped on to the boards of the Melbourne Theatre Royal. A story was once current, it appears, in the Colonies that Barry Sullivan had some time or other been arrested at Belfast in mistake for a prominent and much sought after Fenian. Mr. R. P. Whitworth, an adroit Victorian playwright (who still lives despite such delinquencies), seized upon this legend, and round about it wove a capital little play called *Catching a*

Conspirator. By a happy inspiration he represented Barry as spouting Shakespeare to his captors, every quotation being of such a nature as to strengthen the suspicions of the police. Thanks to a lively sustainment of the equivocal and the excellent acting and mimicry of H. R. Harwood—splendidly made-up to resemble his old colleague—the little piece had great vogue, and ran for forty-six nights to good houses.

After acting with his usual success in Queensland, early in 1866 Sullivan sailed from Brisbane to India, and thence reached England in June. Thus, with a score of acting years still before him, he had already shown his right to the epithet “world-famous,” the use of which by indiscreet business managers, in theatrical advertisements in more recent times, drew down upon his head the occasional sarcasms of the prunes-and-prisms school. Greatly improved in health and physique, and with his histrionic capabilities mellowed in proportion, Sullivan made his reappearance at Drury Lane, under Messrs. Falconer and Chatterton, on September 22 following, playing Falconbridge to Phelps’s King John. “The new Falconbridge,” said the *Athenæum*, then as now a coldly critical journal not easily roused to enthusiasm—“The new Falconbridge was safe with his audience from his very first utterances. Mr. Sullivan’s conception of the character is nearer to that of Charles Kemble than of any other actor within the memory of contemporaries. There is an abundance, but not a superabundance of spirit in it; the utmost freedom, without vulgarity; a graceful ease and not a braggart swagger. . . . Mr. Sullivan’s success was not con-

finer to the comedy or melo-dramatic element of the character. There were other portions in which his display of feeling was given with a quiet but telling effect, no jot of which was lost with the critical part of his audience, who were closely scanning his speech, action, bearing, and expression. His by-play was equally good ; that is, his part in the drama was never forgotten. His very bow to King John was of a real Sir Richard to a substantial king ; and when he bent over the body of the dying monarch there was earnestness of significance in the action, as if the gallant knight felt a respectful sorrow for the condition of his uncle. ‘Old Drury,’ in short, may be congratulated on its acquisition of Mr. Barry Sullivan. Some time has passed since he won golden opinions by his impersonation of Hamlet ; but a certain lack of strength and want of practice were observable. Since then, however, his experience in the Colonies has made a considerable difference in this respect. As manager and chief actor of an Australian theatre he was compelled to venture what in England he might have avoided ; and having, by his excellent conduct of his establishment, secured an extensive patronage was enabled to make essay of his powers in the most trying parts.”

Impersonations of Macbeth, Macduff, Hamlet, Richard III., and Charles Surface followed ; the last mentioned to the Sir Peter of Phelps and the Lady Teazle of Mrs. Herman Vezin. Said the *Daily Telegraph* of October 3—“ Mr. Sullivan’s rendering of Macbeth is much less familiar to the playgoing public of this country ; but if the sustained applause of such a

strong gathering as that of last evening be any criterion, the admiration of the earnest lovers of Shakespeare who are nightly making 'Old Drury' their trysting-place will be found pretty equally divided. Without attempting an elaborate analysis of the character as presented by Mr. Sullivan, it would be difficult to indicate the numerous points of departure from those readings with which the town is familiar. It may be briefly stated, however, that Mr. Barry Sullivan strongly impresses his auditory with the conviction that from the first supernatural soliciting of the witches Macbeth is fully resolved to remove all obstacles in the way of his ambition, and that the letter to his wife conveys that intention. Lady Macbeth readily becomes the partner of his crime, but is thus hardly to be accused of being its instigator, and in those passages in the text which tend to support this view the tragedian places very forcible emphasis. There are some notable variations also from the usual mode of delivering the most familiar lines which will interest, if they do not convince, the hearer; and of these '*Tide and the hour run through the roughest day*' may be quoted as a fair specimen. The performance throughout exhibits the characteristics of an actor who has at least had the courage to venture on novel ground, and who possesses the power to render justice to his own conception. It may be fairly objected to Mr. Barry Sullivan's notion of the rapidity with which the thought of the murder entered the mind of Macbeth that his wife, who considers him 'too full o' the milk of human kindness,' could have had but little knowledge of the darker

moods of his disposition, or else we must be enforced to believe that his nature entirely changed on being accosted by the witches. Whatever opinion may be entertained it is in favour of the Macbeth of Tuesday night that he was unconsciously assisted by Miss Amy Sedgwick, who, venturing for the first time in London on the personation of Lady Macbeth, gave a suggestive rather than a powerful rendering of the character. Her performance is not lacking in intelligence, but it is deficient in force, and much less decided in form and colour than could be desired."

Unfortunately the heartiness of his reception at Drury Lane, together with the inducements of a fat purse and the success of his Australian venture, tempted Barry to enter upon the cares of management in the metropolis. Not a whit disheartened by the proverbially unlucky reputation of the house, he signalised his inception at the Holborn Theatre on Saturday, May 1, 1868, by a revival of *Money*, with himself as Evelyn. The choice of a piece so titled must be reckoned among the ironies of fortuitous circumstance. The enterprise proved what in green-room parlance is equivocally known as "an artistic success"; or, in plain English, a serious pecuniary failure. Sullivan struggled on gamely in the face of ever-increasing difficulties for a couple of years, and then threw up the sponge. Oddly enough, every reason save the right one has been given in explanation of this *fiasco*. Ignoring the tragedian's preceding popularity at Drury Lane, Mr. W. Davenport Adams, in a sympathetic article contributed to *Black and White*

(May 9, 1891), suggests that "he had possibly lost touch, once and for all, with that rather capricious person, the metropolitan playgoer." To this he adds, "Moreover, he had become wedded to the 'star' system. I do not think it can fairly be said of him that he ever presented a 'legitimate' play in a perfunctory or utterly inadequate fashion; but undoubtedly he did not, as a rule, surround himself with colleagues of the first distinction." In writing all this one can quite well see that Mr. Davenport Adams did not view Sullivan's career as a whole, but was thinking of him purely in his latter-day aspect—as a provincial tragedian. Mr. Dutton Cook, in criticising the production of *The Gamester* at the Holborn, in October, 1869,* has no such strictures to pass on the conduct of the theatre. "Each scene of the play," he writes, "is followed with marked attention, and great applause attends the fall of the curtain. The tragedy has been produced with due regard to scenic appointments and decorations; the costumes pertaining rather to the Kemble than the Garrick period. Hair powder is eschewed, and the dresses are of the sober fashion that obtained during the later years of George the Third's reign. Mr. Barry Sullivan is well versed in the traditional style of presenting Beverley's troubles, and plays the part with considerable power. That many of the speeches should be delivered in an extravagant style of elocution, and that the death-scene should be painfully elaborated, must be regarded as a

* Vide "Nights at the Play," p. 79.

tribute to the established rules of the stage. The author's language—'numerous prose' it used to be designated in the last century—is of a high-flown, decorated kind that almost bids defiance to simplicity of delivery. Mr. Sullivan's exertions—and a performance of *Beverley* is no light tax upon the physical resources of an actor—were rewarded with continual applause. Mrs. Vezin appears as Mrs. *Beverley*, and though lacking the strength and compass of voice required for delivering with full effect what are known as 'the Siddons points' of the part, the actress displayed much feeling, and largely enlisted the sympathies of her audience. Mr. Cowper gave a subdued and careful portraiture of the villainous *Stukely*. Mr. Stephens was quite pathetic enough as the faithful *Jarvis*, and Mr. Rayne acquitted himself tolerably as the chivalrous *Lewson*." According to Pascoe's *Dramatic List*, the Mr. Lin Rayne here referred to made his first hit at the Holborn in a comedy entitled *Plain English*—a fact which goes to show that the management was "advanced" enough not to pin its faith entirely to the stock legitimate.

The true secret of Sullivan's qualified failure at the Holborn lay in the inopportuneness of the attempt. In and about the year 1868 dramatic affairs were in a state of crude transition. An infusion of new blood had been experienced with the advent of *Fechter*, who was fast popularising romantic drama. T. W. Robertson was paramount likewise among the forces which were operating to dissipate outworn creeds; and the sensational drama loomed ahead. Amid all this seething and ferment, Shakespeare (after long courses of Phelps

and Charles Kean) fell into desuetude, and his exponents became martyrs to the moment. Alack that it should be said ! Sullivan never afterwards gained firm foothold in the metropolis ; and to his exceeding vexation never found himself appraised there at his colonial or provincial valuation. It was the one vulnerable spot in his armour—the little rift within the lute that made discord of the hymns of his admirers. "That Barry Sullivan was a man of genius," says the writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* already spoken of in our first chapter, "will not, I fancy, be denied ; but his genius, so to speak, was rather that of the emotions than of the intellect. And herein, in my humble opinion, lay the secret of his failure to attain the highest goal. Endowed by nature with all the personal requisites that go to make up a great actor, and capable of realising all the feeling he experienced from it—expressing his conception with individuality and originality—he lacked the intellect to extract all the subtleties of a character. And this failure the London playgoer was quick to detect."

One smells out something sophistical in this morsel of reasoning—probably because of its implied reflection on the critical acumen of all play-goers outside the pale. In reality it only expresses a half-truth. Thoroughly democratic in fibre, Sullivan had an utter repugnance to working up an adventitious if vitally essential popularity *outside* the theatre. He had not the makings of a "fashionable" tragedian, and lacked that *je ne sais quoi* which made of the diminutive and vocally defective Charles Kean the idol of society.

Nothing daunted at his repulse, our hero at once "appealed to the suffrages of the country," entering upon a series of triumphal processions through the provinces, which, allowing for brief, intermittent appearances in the metropolis, went on without cessation until the beginning of the end, some six years ago. Believing, like Brooke, in courting the favour of the masses, he was indulged, times without number, with torchlight processions and other public ebullitions of popular feeling, and (equally like Brooke) was presented in his day with "some hundreds-weight"—to use his own phrase—of gold and silver trophies. Idolised in most provincial cities, his popularity reached its zenith in Dublin, where he would sometimes be met at the railway station by congregated thousands, who, accompanied by half-a-dozen brass bands, would follow him to the Portobello Hotel and clamour outside until appeased by a few remarks from their favourite on the balcony. Indeed, the story goes that a cockney tourist, who once chanced to travel from Dublin to Belfast in the same compartment as the tragedian, became so unnerved at the uproarious welcoming accorded *en route* that, fearing the safety of his scalp at the hands of the wild Irish, he incontinently took refuge under the seat and stubbornly refused to be comforted. Lest, however, it should be considered that these demonstrations of affection were purely the outcome of Celtic impressionism, it may be pointed out that so late as 1885 John Bull himself was similarly worked up to enthusiasm, Northampton in January of that year being a noteworthy example. In Liverpool,

where his Nationalist proclivities were widely known, he had been urged, without avail, three years previously to stand for the representation of that city in the Imperial Parliament. At Belfast in 1883 this culminated in a splendid advertisement for the actor, as the local authorities deemed it expedient to forbid a torchlight procession in his honour, fearing a revival of old feuds between the Montagues and Capulets of inflammable Linenopolis. What with unvaryingly good houses and sixty per cent. of the receipts as his share, it is by no means surprising to find that Sullivan's earnings in later days averaged £7,000 per annum, or that dying, full of honours and of years, he left a handsome fortune to his kin.

An interesting letter addressed to the lessee of the Belfast Theatre—

QUEEN'S AND NORTH WESTERN HOTEL,
BIRMINGHAM, *23rd April, 1873.*

MY DEAR WARDEN,

I am not fixing dates yet, but you shall hear from me at the first opportunity. I am glad your panto. has been successful. You will be pleased to learn that my old luck sticks to me—crowds turned away from all parts nightly in every principal city I have visited since I left you. Methinks I hear you exclaim, "More power to you!" Hope you are both quite well, and with very kind regards from *both*,

I am, dear Warden,

Truly yours,

BARRY SULLIVAN.

Just shaken hands with the captain with whom I sailed from Queensland to India.

During the autumn of 1874 Barry Sullivan closed with an offer of £10,000 from Messrs. Jarrett & Palmer, the American managers, for a 'twelve months' tour through the United States in the year succeeding. The tragedian's many Cork friends had some intelligence of this fact prior to his reappearance at the old Theatre Royal, in George's Street, on November 30, when he was supported by a company under the management of Mr. J. F. Warden, and having for its principal members Miss Rose Coghlan and Mr. J. F. Cathcart. Consequently, at a *matinee* of *Hamlet*, the Mayor (Ald. D. Nagle), accompanied by a number of distinguished Corkmen, among whom were two members of Parliament, visited the theatre, and, on behalf of "his fellow-citizens," presented the tragedian with an address and testimonial, the latter consisting of a magnificent two-handled vase of solid silver, in the Louis Quatorze style, standing upon a richly-chased Shrewsbury salver of the same metal. By way of inscription, the salver bore the following:—"Presented with the accompanying vase, as a tribute to Barry Sullivan, from the citizens of Cork, who are proud of his genius and his fame." As the time drew near for his departure, another "God-speed" was tendered him by his old friends and admirers in London, who assembled at a farewell banquet, held in his honour at the Alexandra Palace, on July 14, 1875. Among those whose names were appended to the tastefully illuminated address presented to our hero on that occasion (and afterwards published in reduced fac-simile by an enterprising photographer), we remark in particular—The Earl of Dunraven (chairman),

Andrew Halliday, E. L. Blanchard, F. B. Chatterton, W. Creswick, E. Falconer, Joseph Hatton, George Honey, Justin M'Carthy, John Ryder, Guy Roslyn, G. A. Sala, E. A. Sothern, A. M. Sullivan, B. Webster, and Charles Wyndham. Similarly fêted at Liverpool on the 24th following, the tragedian sailed for America six days after, and made his reappearance in New York at Booth's Theatre on August 30. A memorable night this! Sullivan's heart swelled with pride when he found himself escorted to the theatre by the Irish Regiment the famous Sixty-ninth, who, some two thousand strong, soon crammed to repletion a house already half-filled by the actor's affectionate compatriots. The play was *Hamlet*, with James Cathcart as the Ghost, Fred. Warde as Laertes, and Louise Hibbert as Ophelia. On the same night Mr. E. L. Davenport, a formidable rival, played the Dane at the Grand Opera House in opposition to our hero. "Mr. Sullivan is a long way from being a great actor," says *Appleton's Journal* (No. 338, vol. xiv., p. 345). "He has a very pleasing face and presence, a fine mellow voice, and he knows how to pose in very picturesque attitudes, and to fill the eye with a succession of well-studied pictures. He unites in these particulars the instincts of the sculptor and the painter; his eminently picturesque make-ups show a fine taste for colour, and his attitudes evince a plastic grace that would make him always an attractive actor in purely picturesque parts. Nor is he without a calm, balanced intelligence. But there is absolutely no fire and no imagination. His grasp of *Hamlet* is of the stage, stagey—that is, it is just that perception of the part

that a thoroughly trained actor would have who has limited his study to all the external arts—of how he shall walk, how he shall stand, how he shall sit, how he shall do this and that piece of ‘business,’ how and where he shall deliver this and that line—but there is no subjective insight, no heed of the fires that burn within, no psychological study, no imaginative grasp for the character of the melancholy and philosophic prince.

. . . In the play scene he makes a telling picture by graceful posing on the floor; and, in fact, throughout this actor is always good in a stage sense, but never really anything more. He is not vigorous enough to please the untutored, nor introspective enough to charm the lovers of Shakespeare’s great creation.” To this it is only fair to add, on the authority of Mr. Laurence Hutton,* that Hamlet was never looked upon as Barry’s strongest part in America. Richard III., Beverley, and Richelieu were his best drawing cards there; although his success, taken generally, was not so thorough as his great English reputation would have justified.

Our correspondent, Mr. W. H. Campbell, renewed his acquaintance with our hero at San Francisco early in 1876, whither he had repaired to open the new Baldwin Theatre. “Strolling up Market Street one forenoon,” he writes, “I met Sullivan, who invited me into the Baldwin Theatre, where rehearsal was going on. As we chatted quietly in the back stalls, his quick ear detected some mistake in the recital of the piece. ‘What’s that? What’s that? Horrible—that will

*Vide “Curiosities of the American Stage,” pp. 289 290.

never do !' he muttered. Then he called out lustily, 'Stop! Stop! Hold on will you there?' Like a flash he left my side, bounding over seats, footlights, and every other impediment, and was upon the stage amidst the performers before I could realise what was the matter. A good deal of his financial success he attributed, by-the-way, to his son, Mr. T. S. Amory Sullivan, whom he described to me as a very capable business man, who attended closely to details."

Although the adherent of a school which paid little attention to scenic accessories, and utterly ignored stage archæology, Barry Sullivan was a martinet at rehearsals, and despite the limited extent of his latter-day repertory, never wearied in the task of thoroughly instilling the business of the piece into his company. A scene of striking importance would be run through again and again until all concerned felt easy in their parts. If the rehearsal went off to his satisfaction he never omitted to thank the ladies and gentlemen for their patience and attention. To those, however, whom he found abstracted or careless he did not hesitate to say, "Here am I putting into a nutshell what it has taken me years of labour and observation to acquire, and you haven't the common courtesy to pay attention." Always kind and gentle to the humblest member of his company whom he found trying to do his best, he invariably came down with a strong hand on all lapses from strict discipline, whether in the form of drunkenness, gagging, guying, or fluffiness. He attributed failure to the "all-right-at-night" system, and saw everything rehearsed as it was to be played.

Preserving this dominating principle outside the theatre he was never hail-fellow-well-met with his company, and did not believe with that unfortunate genius Charles Dillon in adjourning after the labours of the morning, in association with his satellites, to the nearest house of refreshment. Keeping himself to himself when not rehearsing, he generally remained during the day at his hotel, musing over the rôle he was to sustain in the evening, and attending to such details as the examination of every weapon with which he might have to fence during the performance. Unfortunately, owing to his rigid economy there were from time to time many incompetent players in his provincial companies who neither admired his exclusiveness nor relished his rebukes; and these, together with bibulous stage carpenters and property men, were not slow in circulating mendacious stories to his detriment. He was always a good friend, however, to those who served him faithfully, and once gave an old dresser, who had followed his fortunes for years, a present of one hundred pounds to start him in business as a tobacconist.

As an offset to these stories let us hear what the anonymous author of "The Truth about the Stage"* has to say regarding the actor. "My own experience of this eminent tragedian contrasted agreeably with the lying reports of my stage companions. If I had been fortunate enough to meet Mr. Sullivan at the commence-

* A production which owing to its extreme pessimism created some sensation on its appearance in 1885. The late Mr. Hal Louther is said, in theatrical circles, to have been the author; but nothing is known for certain.

ment of my career, I should have been saved many years of toil and degradation. . . . I have known his finest dramatic situations ruined by young actors, who through nervousness have either forgotten some particular bit of business, or failed to give the proper cue. At the end of the act, when some poor fellow had gone to the tragedian's dressing-room to apologise for his shortcomings, instead of black looks and a curse he has received kind words of encouragement. On one occasion, when a persevering young actor ruined a grand scene in a Shakespearian play, I heard Mr. Sullivan interrupt his apology, when the curtain fell, with the following words:—‘My dear boy, you did your best. You were a little nervous. You will do better next time.’ The play of *As you Like It* was being performed at a provincial theatre in the Midland Counties one evening, Mr. Sullivan enacted the rôle of the melancholy Jaques. Touchstone was represented by one of those clowns who always say more than is set down for them. This particular comedian thought he could improve upon the author. In the wrestling scene, when the wrestler was thrown, he had to say, in reply to the duke—

“ ‘He cannot speak, my lord.’ ”

“ In order to obtain a laugh the comedian distorted his features, and exclaimed ‘He *says* he cannot speak, my lord.’ ”

“ When the act-drop fell, Mr. Sullivan went over to where the comedian was standing and said—‘Touchstone was a fool, but not a d——d fool as you have made him. You have obtained a laugh, sir ; but you have spoilt your part.’ ”

Genius may be a law unto itself, but mediocrity, more especially in the legitimate drama, must go by accepted canons. Leaving the metropolis out of the question; the provinces at the present moment are not devoid of sound Shakespearian actors. But the question might well be asked (and in big capitals)—on whose shoulders fell the mantle of Barry Sullivan, *as a repository of the traditions?* Even in his own late day, the tragedian was never tired of complaining that the *bona-fide* actor had disappeared with the stock system, that few among the coming men knew how to speak their mother tongue or walk the stage correctly, and that the one besetting sin of the profession was the insatiate thirst for unearned advancement. Whatever the faults of his system, it at least afforded a rough and ready training in Shakespeare for the novice, the loss of which cannot but be felt and deplored. One has only to point to the many prominent actors and actresses who learnt the A B C of their art under Barry Sullivan to justify the “old guard” of playgoers for their loyal support to the chieftain.

Reappearing at Drury Lane on September 23, 1876 (what time the dramatic critic of *The Times* and the lessee of the theatre had a wordy warfare concerning his impersonation of Richard III.),* our hero had the

* *Macbeth* and *Richard III.* were performed on alternate nights during this engagement, the latter with “new historical scenery” by William Beverly, and “historically correct costumes” designed by Alfred Maltby from researches among the following authorities:—The Harleian MSS., Hewitt, Meyrick, Shaw, Grose, Planche, &c. Among those figuring in prominent support to Sullivan were J. F. Cathcart, Henry Sinclair, Charles Vandenhoff, Frank Tyars, Percy Bell, James Johnstone, Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Madame Fanny Huddart, and Miss Edith Stuart.

misfortune, on the sixtieth night of the run of Cibber's hybridous play, to receive an unlucky sword thrust in the left eye, Mr. Sinclair, the bright, particular Richmond, having made a mistake in the preconcerted business of the great fight in the last act. For some time the recovery of his sight was despaired of; but after lying twenty days and nights, Richard was himself again, seemingly, in every faculty. We qualify this record of his recovery advisedly, as a curious episode related by Mr. J. W. Flynn will go to show. It appears that some time afterwards Barry, while on a visit to Cork, called at the house of a friend, and had occasion in the course of conversation to allude to the accident. "The strange thing about it," he remarked, "is that while the eye is quite healed, there is a sort of mist over it, as if all were not right yet." On hearing this one of the daughters of his host asked the tragedian to turn his eyes to the light. "Why, Mr. Sullivan," ejaculated the lady, after examining the injured place with the scrutiny of a hawk, "there's a hair in 'your eye!" Further consultation with an eminent London oculist at once demonstrated the correctness of this statement. A hair of the eyelash which had remained in the eyeball after the process of curing the wound had been effected was then removed, giving to the tragedian his pristine visual acuteness.

When one recalls to mind the intense realism and soul-stirring vigour of the Sullivanic stage combat—in every way the antithesis of the "two up and two down" of the palmy days—the wonder is that accidents were so infrequent. Some idea of the virulence with which

Barry, as Richard, assailed Richmond in the last act may be gathered from the fact that, comparatively trifling as is the latter-mentioned part, he would never, under any circumstances, permit it to be doubled, deeming the brief but remarkably effective contest with himself quite exhaustive enough for the sturdiest member of his company. It was no mean compliment to the tragedian that his stage-fights in *Richard III.* and *Macbeth* invariably drew as big an audience of professionals in the wings as of horny-handed sons of toil in the pit and gallery. With the first superb flourish of the Crookback's sword, excitement reached fever-heat, and the house, as if by an electric shock, became surcharged with a terrible sense of the realism of the thing. The "gods," losing all touch with the illusion of the scene, not infrequently viewed the contest as a matter of personal rivalry between the actors, and, scrambling to their feet as one man, invariably punctuated each cut and thirst with stentorian cries of "Go on, Barry!"

On Saturday, December 1, 1878, a National Banquet in Sullivan's honour was held in Dublin, at the Exhibition Palace, when Mr. C. J. Fay, M.P., read an address eminently flattering to the guest of the evening. The Right Hon. the Lord Mayor (Maurice Brooks, M.P.), presided, and the large and distinguished assembly comprised the leading citizens of Dublin, members of Parliament and of the learned professions, and representatives of literature and art. A similar compliment was paid the tragedian on the following Saturday evening, when the citizens of Cork tendered him a banquet at the Imperial Hotel. It was then he made

the memorable speech from which we have already quoted in our opening chapter, and in the course of which, referring with pardonable pride to an early period in his starring career, said, "I took my standard as a Shakespearian actor and determined to raise the Shakespearian banner aloft, and never to lower it. And I assure you that it was with extreme difficulty I, for many years alone, upheld the Shakespearian drama in Great Britain. Every new piece, every new straw that came upon the surface, was caught up in order to make ends meet; but I never lowered the Shakespearian standard, and perhaps to that I now owe the honour, the delight, the privilege, of standing here, your guest, to-night." At a latter stage of the proceedings the tragedian so far unbent as to delight the assembly with a capitally-rendered Irish comic song!

Erected by public subscription, on a plot of ground bordering on the river, and presented by that munificent patron of the bard, the late Mr. C. E. Flower, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, was dedicated to Thespian worship on April 23, 1879, by a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. On that noteworthy occasion Barry Sullivan renewed old-time associations by playing Benedick to the Beatrice of Helen Faucit, who as Mrs. Theodore (now Lady) Martin, emerged from a well-earned retirement to pay her tribute to the Master. *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, and *Much Ado* were represented on subsequent evenings, when our hero appeared alternately with Helen Faucit and Miss Wallis. During the August following

a series of five benefit performances were arranged at the Haymarket Theatre (through the generosity of Mr. J. S. Clarke, the lessee), as a testimonial to Buckstone the comedian; and at one of these Sullivan repeated his impersonation of Benedick. In quite a comedy mood at this period—and with equal generosity—he played the same part to the Beatrice of Miss Wallis, at one of two benefits tendered in Manchester to Mr. Tom Chambers, sometime treasurer of the Theatre Royal in that city. The other took place on the preceding night, when Henry Irving and Ellen Terry appeared in *Charles I.*

A second dramatic festival, extending over three weeks, began at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, on April 19, 1880, when Sullivan as the star was principally supported by Messrs. W. H. Stephens, John Amory, W. H. Hallatt, Arthur Matthison, F. A. Scudamore, H. Hamilton, Steyne, H. Turner, and Mesdames Masson, Austin, Hope, and Newcome. The productions consisted of *Hamlet*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Gamester*, and *The School for Scandal*. Behaving in the true spirit of an artist and an enthusiast, the tragedian, although proffered half the receipts by the governing council, gave his own and his company's services free as a donation to the institution.

In keeping with the steadfastness of his loves and hates was Sullivan's princely act in heading the testimonial presented by the profession and the public to Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Warden, after the destruction by fire of the Theatre Royal, Belfast, early in June, 1881, with the

handsome sum of fifty pounds. Not that this was by any means the tragedian's first substantial tribute of esteem to the man who had for years organised his provincial tours and in every way conserved his interests. Among the few cherished relics saved out of the debris of the Theatre Royal fire was a very massive vestibule clock presented years previously by Sullivan to his *fidus Achates*. Although it never recovered the shock of this disaster, and, like a more famous timepiece, "stopped short, never to go again," its proud possessor has given it a place of honour on the dress-circle lobby of his new theatre. Unfortunately a slight misunderstanding marred the communion of our Damon and Pythias in later years ; but one is safe in saying that no sincerer mourner followed the remains of Barry Sullivan to their last resting place than Joseph Warden.

Not contenting himself in merely subscribing to the Warden testimonial, our hero gave especial *eclat* to the opening of the new Theatre Royal, Belfast, on Thursday, December 22, 1881, by appearing there, under circumstances of some personal inconvenience, as Evelyn in *Money*. It was stated at that time that he had been offered the enormous sum of £24,000 for a ten-months tour in America. For the truth of this we are not prepared to vouch ; but it is at any rate certain that Transatlantic playgoers were still prepared to receive their old favourite with open arms. So late as the July of 1886 Mr. Henry E. Abbey made overtures to the tragedian for a tour of forty weeks, commencing in New York, and proceeding through Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, St. Paul,

Cincinnati, Omaha, Kansas, and Denver, thence to the Western States of Canada. The American manager was to provide the entire company, scenery, and all accessories, to defray all the star's travelling and hotel expenses, and allow him 70 per cent. of the receipts. It is safe to infer that only the lack of self-confidence, induced by ill-health, prevented the tragedian from swallowing this tempting bait. Happily for his Transatlantic friends, they did not see him in his decadence, and can only remember him in the meridian of his powers.

Of Sullivanic stories, good, bad, and indifferent, there is virtually no end. Two feline anecdotes are related, which speak volumes for the tragedian's hold upon his audiences. During an engagement at Cork, in 1881, *Richard III.* was played at the Saturday *matinee* to an overflowing house. The curtain had not long risen on the tent scene when, amid the deepest silence and the most concentrated attention of the audience, a large black cat, the property of the housekeeper, emerged slowly from the wings. Making straight for the footlights—like an old actor striving to get into the focus—pussy upraised one paw and gave forth a pleading *miaow*! There was a smothered exclamation from the background which had not the ring of a benison, and the cat, having delivered herself of her message, made a graceful exit on the O.P. side. For keen appreciation of the humour of an unrehearsed situation, commend us to a South of Ireland audience. But, strange to say, the incident, which on most occasions would have evoked a burst of merriment, passed over with a flicker-

ing smile and a tightening of the lips. About two years afterwards (or, for the benefit of the sticklers for chapter and verse, on Monday, September 17, 1883) a similar episode occurred, with equally happy results, during an engagement at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham. Just as Barry Sullivan, in the closet scene of *Hamlet*, had exclaimed "A rat, a rat, dead for a ducat—dead," and rushed off hastily, another very fine and large black cat (all well-constituted theatrical cats are of sable hue) bounded after him, as if to make assurance doubly sure.

In Stirling's "Old Drury Lane" a story is related which we give in the writer's own words. "Sullivan, acting in the Potteries, requested the leader of a small orchestra to let him have the wind instruments behind the scenes in the fifth act of *Richard the Third*.

" 'Sir, I c—a—n—t' (*with a stutter*).

"OFFENDED TRAGEDIAN: 'Sir, I insist; send up your wind.'

"AGITATED FIDDLER: 'I—I—I—'

"ENRAGED ACTOR: 'Where's the manager?'

"The manager answered for himself: 'Here, sir.'

" 'Mr. Elphinstone, your conductor objects to let me have his wind instruments on the stage for the march in the fifth act.'

" 'Poor fellow! he stutters, and is deaf.'

"BARRY: 'Why did he not tell me so?'

"IRATE VIOLIN: Yes; and I—I—I—I'll tell you more, sir: there's only one wind, a trombone. Am I to—to—to cut him in two; send up one half to you, and keep the other half in the orchestra?'

"This silenced Richard; he proceeded to Bosworth Field minus wind."

Of late years, when not pursuing his professional avocation, nothing delighted Sullivan better than spending his days in that quondam Bohemian resort, the Savage Club, of which he was an extremely popular member. It was remarked there by his many friends that the grace of action and old-world courtliness which were distinguishing traits of his art-work clung to him unconsciously in his private life. Not that, like the great Elliston of yore, he acted off the stage as well as on. Everything he did or said was effected with so much naturalness and ease that one could quite well see that the acquirements and accomplishments of the *actor* had merged into and become part and parcel of the individuality of the *man*. In the *Pall Mall Gazette* sketch already referred to, Sullivan's anonymous panegyrist took occasion to point out that in the early days of his Savage Club membership it was his custom to dye his hair, "but since the time when the Prince of Wales accepted the companionship of that last corner of Bohemia, his broad, strong frame, surmounted by a handsome head, with its refined and clear-cut features, its white hair, black shaggy eyebrows and piercing eyes, formed one of the most decorative ensembles in human shape well to be conceived. His face was plentifully pitted with smallpox, but such was the charm of his sweet smile, or, when in anger, of his flashing eye, that the marks seemed in no way to interfere with its beauty." To which pen-portrait might well be added the fact that Sullivan possessed in striking degree that peculiar conformation

of nose wherein the nostrils expand upon the cheeks—an invariable concomitant, according to the testimony of expert physiognomists, of well-developed histrionic capacity.

The allusion just made to the custom in the profession of dyeing the hair on the first indications of the foot-marks of time becoming apparent, remind us of a rather good story. Some years ago Mr. J. F. Warden and the popular tragedian Mr. T. C. King were to meet in Birmingham, to renew their professional associations after a long separation. On proceeding towards the theatre King met one of the company coming in the opposite direction, and evidently considerably excited in his mind over something. "Have you seen Joe Warden yet?" said the other with abruptness, on arriving at hailing distance. "No," replied King, "what's up?" "Bless your soul, he's as white as the driven snow." "Bah," retorted King, with half-amused petulance, as he strode away, "there's nothing in that. I could have been white twenty years before Warden, if *I'd wanted!*"

Taking up our narrative, we find that Barry Sullivan, on Wednesday, July 26, 1882, entertained a hundred of his fellow "Savages" to supper at a banquet given in the Criterion Restaurant. Subsequently, when making the usual inquiries, one of the guests sent him the following acrostic:—

B e mine, dear friend, to say we owe
A pleasant debt to you,
R emembering how, two nights ago,
R eflecting all your genial glow,
Y our guests around you drew.

S urrounded there by song and wit,
 U nheeded sped the night ;
 L ike laggards, when we rose to flit,
 L o ! it was morning light.
 I will not frame upon my lip
 V ain words my heart to speak
 A t such a pledge of fellowship—
 N o ! words are all too weak.

On the verge of his provincial tour of 1883-84 the Savage Club returned the compliment to the tragedian by giving a supper in his honour, towards the middle of August, in their own dining hall. Mr. P. J. Duffy, a Dublin man, presided over an assemblage of close on two hundred members and guests—all men of light and leading, of the stamp of Barton M'Guckin, Charles Duval, Walter Mackay, Edward Terry, Charles Warner, and Signor Carados. Sometime in the “wee sma’ hours ayont the twal” Mr. Horace Lennard, the society poet, recited the following *impromptu fait a loisir* as fitting to the moment:—

How often is mirth but a mask for a sorrow,
 And laughter is loudest when hiding regret ;
 The guest of to-night shall have left us to-morrow,
 So let us be merry—the table is set.

Away on the warpath a chieftain is going,
 The trail of the Guineas is seen through the land,
 The Savage shall follow where'er it is showing,
 And gather the bright golden scalps in his hand.

What cheer shall we give him who now is departing,
 The bravest of all our Bohemian tribe ?
 A shake of the hand and a toast before starting,
 The goodwill of player, of painter, and scribe.

May Health and Good Fortune for ever attend him,
May Pleasure be always his scarecrow for pain ;
And after his triumphs may fellowship send him
To rest on his honours among us again.

The supper card, designed by Mr. Walter Mackay, so long identified as "The Captious Critic" of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, was quite a happy inspiration. As thus:—

MENU.

"Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart."—
Comedy of Errors.

SALMON.

"Sweet fish."—*Cymbeline.*

SALMON MAYONNAISE.

"What have we here? A fish."—*Love's Labour Lost.*

RICHELIEU LOBSTERS.

LOBSTER SALAD.

"My salad days, when I was green in judgment."—*Antony and Cleopatra.*

"Short-legged hens."—*Henry IV.*

(ROAST AND BOILED.)

"There is cold meat."—*Cymbeline.*

"A piece of beef and mustard."—*Taming of the Shrew.*

"Baked meats."—*Romeo and Juliet.*

BEEF A LA PRESSE.

"What's this?"—*Taming of the Shrew.*

HAM-LOTTE (*i.e.*, A LITTLE HAM).

"My Lady Tongue."—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

GALANTINE OF VEAL.

"Is not veal a calf?"—*Love's Labour Lost.*

GAMESTER PIE.

“Sweets to the sweet.”—*Hamlet*.

VERONESE PASTRY.

MERINGUES AU MICHAEL GUNN.

SHAMROCK JELLY.

CREME AU MACBETH.

“Stewed prunes.”—*Measure for Measure*.

“Pippins and cheese.”—*Merry Wives of Windsor*.

“Just so much as you can take on a knife’s point.”—*Much Ado About Nothing*.

“A thousand salads.”—*All’s Well that Ends Well*.

“Drink to the general joy of the whole table and to our dear friend.”—*Macbeth*.

Opening his tour under Mr. Michael Gunn’s management at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, on Monday, August 20, Barry Sullivan proceeded to “gather the bright golden scalps” with the utmost promptitude, playing during his first week there to upwards of £1,300. Visits to Leeds, Sheffield, and Birmingham followed with equally pleasant results; and the warmth of the *Caed mille failthe* given him in Dublin was something to remember. This tour (which ended in May, 1884) is noteworthy for Sullivan’s capital assumption of Falstaff in *Henry IV.*, in which the younger generation of playgoers were afforded some indication of his early versatility. An impersonation in the highest sense of the term, Barry’s fat knight had not a suspicion of the measured mannerisms of voice and action which marked his latter-day tragic acting. Indeed, the *Belfast News-Letter*, to our mind, did not exceed the limits of critical panegyric in referring to it as “a piece of comedy which, for subtlety of portraiture, without a suspicion

of caricature, is scarcely equalled upon the modern stage."

Nothing of moment occurred from this period until the year 1886, when the first indications of Sullivan's iron constitution giving way under the strain were to be noted. Paradoxical as it may seem, the last of the great traditional school of tragedians unwittingly courted death in striving to avoid the errors and indiscretions which blasted the career of many of his illustrious predecessors. Steering his barque with exceeding care, he sailed clear of the Scylla of self-indulgence only to become wrecked upon the Charybdis of asceticism. Of firm resolution, and never giving way to moods, not a drop of liquor had passed his lips within the walls of a theatre for fully forty years. Warned by the result of Kean's occasional "cold brandy" at the wings, and of Brooke's "hot rummer," he eschewed stimulants, merely moistening his lips from time to time with lemonade or barley-water. Apart from this, he lived, on the whole, somewhat frugally; and even for supper was wont to content himself with a glass of water and a piece of dry bread. Naturally enough this extreme abstinence, combined with the continuous and very exacting labour of acting, told in time on an otherwise strong frame. When Sir Andrew Clarke was called in, on the first serious signs of breaking up becoming apparent, he at once advised the tragedian to live more generously, and take a little whiskey with his meals. It was too late, however, and one can only regret now that such self-denial in the cause of art did not meet with more fitting reward.

Skilfully patched up, the tragedian started his tour on September 13, 1886. Replying to a Manchester interviewer shortly afterwards, he expressed his great dislike to the spirit of the present generation of actors who advertise their every ailment. "What little reputation I've had," said he, "I think I have won finely and honourably by my public performances, and I detest and despise those tricks which now seem to form part of the actor's stock-in-trade. If a player now-a-days has the toothache the news seems to find its way into print; but throughout my illness, which was long and severe, I sedulously prevented any details from appearing in the papers. Let an actor stand or fall by his art, and not depend upon adventitious aids and paltry newspaper advertisements."

Eager for work, the strong mind so far subjugated and buoyed up the ailing body, it was actually said of him by the press in Glasgow—during the prosperous visit there of March, 1887—that he showed no falling off in his robust and vigorous method, and appeared like Antaeus of old to have renewed his powers after temporary discomfiture. His confidants, nevertheless, knew full well he had suffered greatly all through the tour, and that towards the end of it he had extreme difficulty in acting at all. As a matter of fact, when he brought his Liverpool engagement at the Royal Alexandra Theatre to a close on Saturday, June 4, 1887, with an impersonation of Richard III. he had all unconsciously fought his last fight and aroused his last audience. Fitting was it that the unpremeditated event should take place in the city where

his gifts were first recognised and his talents so generously fostered.

Resting for some months in the bosom of his family, at his residence, 46 Albany Villas, Hove, Brighton, Sullivan recuperated to such an extent that he urged upon his eldest son and business manager to make the usual engagements for the tour of 1888-89.* Not long after this, however, as the tragedian was indulging in a hearty laugh over some reminiscence of his salad days, which he had just related to the home circle, he fell back in his chair, without a word of warning, stricken with paralysis of the brain. So little hope was entertained of his recovery that on Thursday, August 23, 1888, it was deemed expedient the Rev. Father Donnelly should administer the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. At this juncture one is somewhat curiously reminded of the passage from *Hamlet*, which the tragedian had written out years previously for reproduction in fac-simile in *The Era Almanack* of 1875—

“ If it be now, 'tis not to come ;
If it be not to come, it will be now ;
If it be not now, yet it will come ;
The readiness is all ! ”

With some such philosophy, indeed, did he bear his long and tedious illness. Helplessly bedridden, and with but faint glimmerings of intelligence, he was grit to the last. Kept alive for weeks and weeks on milk and

* These dates were not cancelled subsequently, as stated by *The Era* in its obituary article, but fulfilled by Mr. John Amory Sullivan, the tragedian's younger son, who appeared in his father's repertory.

lime-juice, he wasted away under the devastations of disease until the task of lifting him in and out of bed, which could with difficulty be performed at the outset by two sisters from the Convent of the Sacred Heart, was accomplished with ease before the end by only one of these sympathetic nurses. With it all, however, he clung stubbornly to life, and only yielded at last to an attack of Russian influenza. After a moment of consciousness he passed quietly away at one o'clock on Sunday, May 3, 1891, in the presence of the entire family, consisting of his wife, three daughters, and two sons.

On the Friday following a solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of his soul was celebrated at the Church of the Sacred Heart, in Hove, the music being impressively rendered by some of the principal members of the choir of Brompton Oratory. Subsequently the remains were conveyed to London, and thence to Dublin *via* Holyhead, for interment on the following day in Glasnevin Cemetery. Owing to the privacy of the funeral arrangements, there was not as large a gathering of the public on Saturday morning as might have been expected; but by twelve o'clock Westland Row was crowded with people, waiting to get a glimpse of the *cortège* as it passed towards Brunswick Street. All along the route knots of sympathetic Irishmen had gathered to pay their last respects to their great compatriot. Signs of mourning were also to be noted in the drawn blinds and closed doors of many of the principal places of business.

Encased in a coffin of polished elm, with Gothic fittings, the remains of the deceased tragedian were conveyed to their last resting-place in a hearse drawn

by four horses. Conspicuous among the mass of floral memorials sent by sorrowing relatives and friends was a large wreath of beautiful roses "with Henry Irving's respectful sympathy," and another composed principally of lilies of the valley and orchids, "with loving sympathy from J. L. Toole." The chief mourners were Mr. Amory Sullivan and Mr. Terrot, secretary of the Savage Club.

Glasnevin Cemetery was reached about one o'clock, when all that was mortal of poor Barry Sullivan was rendered up to Alderman Meagher and Mr. J. Lombard, members of the cemeteries committee, and to Mr. John O'Connell, the superintendent. After prayers had been read in the Mortuary Chapel by the Rev. Mr. Coffey, chaplain, the body of the great actor was laid in its last resting-place in the new chapel section, bordering on the O'Connell circle. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well"—side by side with some of Ireland's noblest sons.

"Calm-fronted, staunch, expectant, and unshaken,
He dared the worst that any fate could bring—
For him, by iron purpose ne'er forsaken,
The grave no victory had, and death no sting."

Among the sorrowing friends and admirers of the dead actor who heard the clods rattle with a cruel harshness on his coffin were Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P.; Mr. T. Harrington, M.P.; Dr. J. E. Kenny, M.P.; Mr. John Redmond, M.P.; Mr. Patrick O'Brien, M.P.; Mr. Edmund Leamy, M.P.; Dr. Christopher Gunn and Mrs. Gunn, Captain M'Keon, Dr. Wade, T.C.; Dr. J. J. Murphy, Dr. Michael Connolly, F.R.C.S.; Professor

Fitzpatrick, Messrs. Michael Davitt, Charles Hyland, Ellis Jones, J. Whitbread, F. R. Benson, J. B. Hall, Charles O'Connell, B.L.; W. J. M'Dowell, W. Willis Healy, Joseph Gallagher, Gerald R. Fitzgerald, J. F. Warden, J. Petrie O'Byrne, John O'Hea, S. R. Cunningham, James Woods, J. J. Nagle, R. M. Levey, Charles Dunne, B.L.; John Horgan, R. Downing, J. Symington, John Clancy, Christopher Enrell, P. J. Gough, J. B. Armstrong, John Magrath, Hugh Doyle, W. W. Small, J. Wyse Power, Joseph Holland, James Logan, James Pentony, James Carlyle, J. C. Sherlocke, Christopher Carroll, Timothy Hanley, jun., Thomas G. Warren, Patrick Biggins, Jeremiah Perry, John J. Foley, A. Rosenberg, R. F. O'Connor, George J. W. Stone, Bernard Goulding, jun., C. H. Callanan, and James Delaney, the last mentioned representing the Dublin Typographical Benevolent Fund, to which the deceased had been a frequent donor.

Of Barry Sullivan's career, more particularly in its latter-day aspects, something more by way of impartial summing up needs to be said before closing this record. Despite the venom of detractors, who affected to see the whole man in the stilted mannerisms of his brief period of decadence, he can never be said—like many another fine tragedian—to have lagged superfluous on the stage. To the last his popularity with provincial audiences never waned; but we fear it was a popularity born of accretive goodwill rather than critical appreciation. If, therefore, he did not experience the cutting callousness meted out to the great Edwin Forrest, who, in the sear and yellow leaf, played week after week to

a succession of empty houses, there is at any rate no doubt that without much excuse he lingered too long on the boards for his reputation's sake. Whatever his blemishes they were purely the outcome of the dogmas of his school reduced to an absurdity, most likely, by the exigence of the times. It was the stately and orotund school of the Kembles, the "paw and pause" cultus, which really lost all true vitality with the abandonment of the stock system a score of years ago. It is best for us that we should frankly acknowledge its demise at this period, and concede that Barry Sullivan, by dint of a fine individuality and immense will-power, galvanized it in after years into something bearing a marvellous resemblance to full-blooded life. Obviously enough the twitching corpse of out-worn creeds had begun to crumble away even before the hands of the manipulator had lost a tittle of their cunning.

At the outset of his starring career, and in fact up to the year 1876, Sullivan, during his provincial wanderings, contented himself in taking with him a leading lady and gentleman, by way of principal support, confident that the stock companies then in vogue were sufficiently grounded in the legitimate for his purpose and for the requirements and demands of the (theatrically) uneducated audiences of the period. The rule of the metropolis soon, however, began to be felt in the larger provincial cities owing to accelerated methods of travel, and with the dawn of the combination system country playgoers were taught to look for a higher level of all-round acting, with more careful stage mounting. Conservative to the finger-tips, our

hero presented an unbending front to this innovation, and, deprived of his stationary stock company, arranged for an itinerant one to accompany him. In justification of the faith within him he strove for years to perpetuate an anachronism, labouring with so much strenuousness against overwhelming odds that one need scarcely wonder whence came the seeds of disease whose development resulted in premature dissolution.

To say that Sullivan never enjoyed the support of any players of capability or eminence would be doing an unwarrantable injustice to his memory. Glancing back through the vista of years, we can easily recall without much forethought, as having figured from time to time in the tragedian's retinue, such names as Rose Coghlan, Adeline Stanhope, Maud Brennan, Grace Edgar, Mrs. Hudson Kirby, J. F. Warden, J. F. Cathcart, George Warde, J. G. Swanton, and Bassett Roe. But taken as a whole, his support from first to last had all the crudity, all the unevenness, and all the inefficiency which marked the second-rate stock company in days of yore ; and his productions were generally mounted and costumed "in a concatenation accordingly." It was only necessary for Henry Irving to make one tour of the provinces in 1876, and present his repertory with attention to *ensemble* and careful staging, to give the death-blow to this slipshod method of performing the legitimate. Year after year, however, Barry Sullivan went on in his own sweet way, and it was not indeed until the tour of 1883-84 (when "special scenery and armour" figured prominently in the bills) that any concession was made to the spirit of the times.

For the limited nature of his latter-day repertory, Barry Sullivan was less to blame than some of his posthumous detractors would have us believe. During the last two decades of his career, he had favoured the provinces with productions of *Richard III.*, *Hamlet*, *The Gamester*, *Richelieu*, *The Stranger*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Wonder*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *The School for Scandal*, *Othello*, *Money*, *Don Cæsar de Bazan*, *The Wife*, *King Lear*, *Henry IV.*, and *Love's Sacrifice*. In many of his lesser known impersonations, he was if anything finer than in the parts now prominently associated with his name. In *King Lear* he had the regal bearing, the powers of voice, the tender though vehement spirit, essential to the character. His curse scene, as the demented king, has certainly never been excelled within living memory, save perhaps in the one noteworthy instance of John M'Cullough. His *Julian St. Pierre* was magnificent in its melodramatic picturesqueness and force, and his *Falstaff* surprisingly unctuous and natural. Nevertheless, experience taught him that the first seven or eight plays on our list possessed the greatest drawing powers, and hence he grew in time to perform little else.

"You said just now that you had no favourite parts," said a Liverpool journalist once in the course of an interview with the tragedian.* "Now, I confess I have always found it rather difficult to account for your preference for *Beverley* and *the Stranger*—the first especially."

* Vide *The Liverpool Liberal Review*, Nov. 7th, 1886.

"I have no special fondness, as you seem to imply, for those parts. In producing them I am guided by the judgment of the public. You mayn't like them, but the public do. Besides, I consider Mrs. Beverley one of the most charming characters in dramatic fiction."

"But the unrelieved gloom of the story?"

"(Smiling) People like to be harrowed sometimes, you know—regularly screwed up; and English people do especially. Another proof of the truth of the saying about their taking their pleasures sadly."

Something has already been said in these pages of the hold which Sullivan had on his admirers in such characters as Richard III. A curious scene, which took place since his death, in the Belfast Theatre, served to show how thoroughly acceptable he had rendered the effective clap-traps of Cibber in that exacting rôle. Mr. F. R. Benson, with praiseworthy reverence for the bard, had announced a performance of *Richard III.* from the original text, but "the gods" on the night of production, being practically unversed in the refinements of description, soon became mystified at the absence of all the well-known and well-beloved points. The clamour in the regions above grew apace until Mr. Benson thought it expedient to step forward and explain the discrepancy. The house then settled down to enjoy the performance, but not before one of "the gods" had jocosely suggested that they should "Send for Barry."

Sullivan's frequent repetition of the half-dozen characters referred to no doubt contributed in time to the development of a stageyness which opponents of the old school were not slow in animadverting upon. But

other elements conduced to the decline in his maturity of a man whom we know, on the testimony of experts, to have been in his early days not only an actor of extreme versatility and naturalness, but one, moreover, who was somewhat in advance of his time. Mr. John Coleman has expressed some surprise that the protean acquaintance of his youth should in later years (when he seldom saw him act) be characterised as stilted and old-fashioned. Still the two styles are after all reconcilable. Youth, ever anticipative, lives in the day after to-morrow; Age, blandly retrospective, pins its faith in the day before yesterday.

The responsibilities of Barry Sullivan's position grew with his ever-increasing popularity. Hating incompetence, he yet (partly from principle and partly owing to economic considerations) put a premium upon it in his companies. Playgoers came in time to tolerate such blemishes, and gave the tragedian to understand that *he* alone was "the show." Hence he divined that great things were invariably expected of him, and, sooth to say, he seldom disappointed the anticipations of his audience. Though an actor of the emotions rather than of the intellect, he could not afford—with all this responsibility resting Atlas-like upon him—to have those moods which are at once the blessing and the curse of the intuitive actor. Unlike many others of his class and kidney, he fought these demons with stern resolution instead of alcohol. His was the victory every time; but in gaining it he grew more and more mechanical in utterance and bearing.

In conceding this, however, to his detractors we abate not a tittle of our claim that, in days to come when reputations can be dispassionately weighed, Barry Sullivan will rank side by side with the leading theatrical luminaries of the century. The stage wants many such men now—men of high ideals; steadfast of purpose; thorough; capable of self-abnegation in the cause of art. But alas! *autre temps, autre mœurs!* Under existing conditions it would be idle to look for the up-springing of a new race of Creswicks, Phelps, Booths, or Sullivans. Darkness fast gathers in around the Old Guard of playgoers, but amid their sorrow and despair they have still some slight consolation left in remembering that

“Those great spirits went down like the suns,
And left upon the mountain tops of death
A light which made them lovely.”

THE END.

APPENDIX.

BARRY SULLIVAN'S FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.

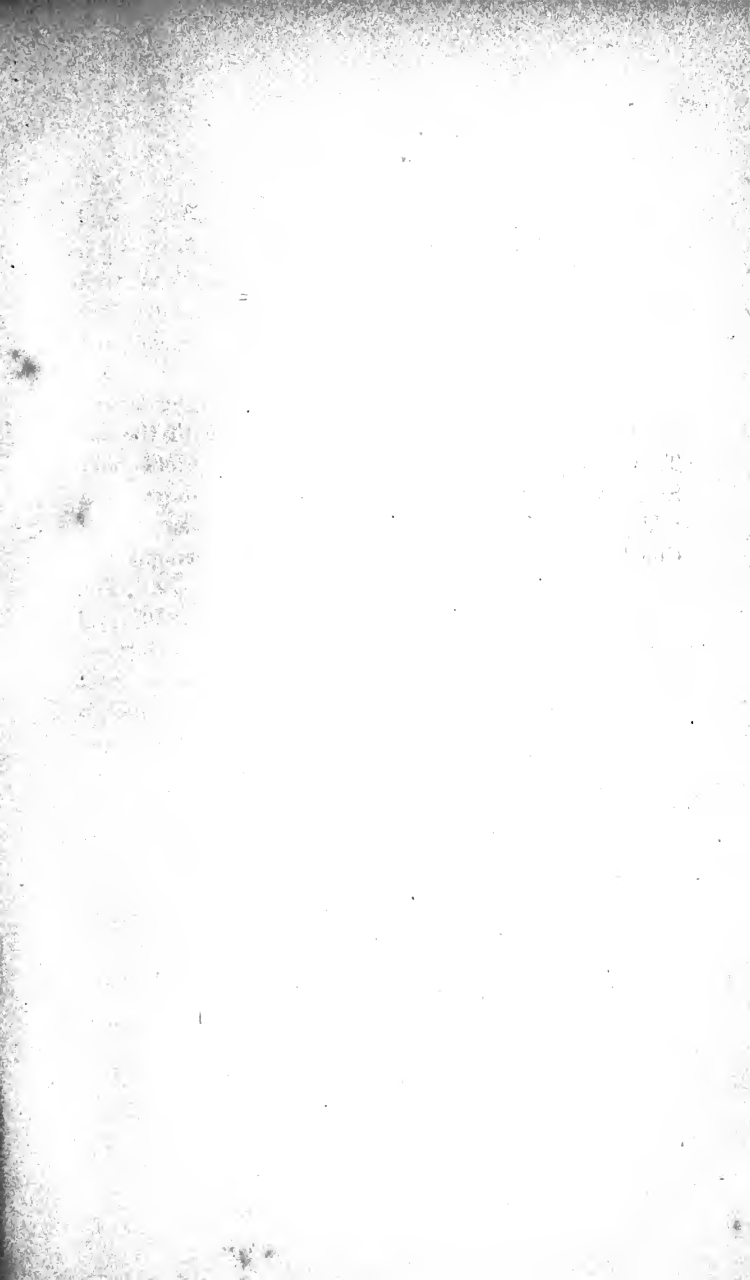
—*Vide p. 12.*

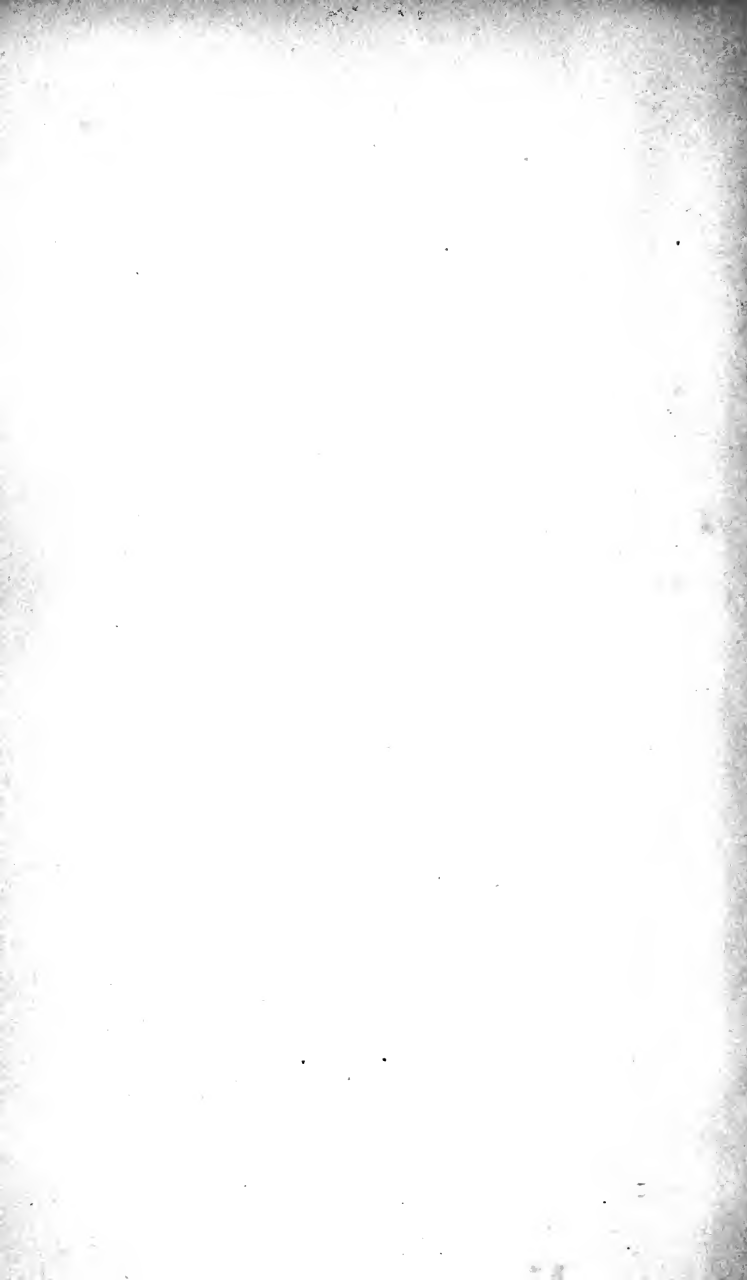
ALTHOUGH the tragedian frequently stated that he made his *debut*, under Seymour, at Cork, as Young Meadows in *Love in a Village*, he apparently never gave the date of the occurrence. It would seem now to have taken place at an earlier period than is usually assigned to that event. Just as we are going to press an important communication reaches us from Mr. George Arbuckle, Solicitor, of 42 Fleet Street, Dublin, in which our correspondent says—"His name (as 'Mr. Sullivan') appears all through the bills of Seymour's Company in 1837, and that is also what he is called in Paumier's bills all through the Spring season of 1840, when he appeared in several small parts with Mrs. Honey, Sheridan Knowles, Miss Elphinstone, and others. I saw Barry Sullivan several times with Mr. Paumier (an excellent tragedian but never sufficiently appreciated) in the season of 1840, and recollect his appearance well. He was then deeply marked with smallpox, which wore out as he advanced in life. I was present, futhermore, several times subsequently when he acted with Frank Seymour's Company. I did not see him in 1837, but have very little doubt that he is the same who appears in Seymour's bills of that year."

While some surprise might naturally be expressed that a boy of thirteen should make his *debut* in a leading rôle in a comic opera, it is not impossible that Sullivan at that age might have had a good soprano voice qualifying him in some measure to render the music of the tenor part.

In corroboration of his statement Mr. Arbuckle forwards two interesting play-bills dealing with the old Theatre Royal, George's Street, Cork. The first (under Seymour) bears date June 16, 1837, and shows that "Mr. Sullivan" played Seyton to the Macbeth of Charles Kean, then fulfilling a starring engagement, and the Gardener in the farce of *The Weathercock*. The other bill is dated Monday, February 24, 1840, and shows that our hero played First Pirate to the Norman of Paumier in the drama of *The Sea Captain*, and Firedrake (a Demon) in the musical burletta of *Giovanni in London* to the Don of Mrs. Wilkins—announced as her original character.







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